SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM SUSTRANS

Sustrans have provided the last five monitoring reports for the National Cycle Network, following their evidence on 26 September, when they indicated they could provide “evidence of use of infrastructure, in particular relating to usage and empirical evidence”.

The real cycling revolution
How the face of cycling is changing
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Cycling steps up a gear on the National Cycle Network

Sustrans has recorded the biggest ever increase in the number of people cycling on the National Cycle Network, with 40 million more cycling trips made during 2011 than in the year before – an 18% increase. In total 256 million trips were made by bike on the National Cycle Network.

Overall the number of walking and cycling trips made on the Network increased by 15% to 484 million. This contrasts with official statistics from the Department for Transport which shows walking in decline and cycling to be static.

And every part of the UK played a role. Cycling increased by 19% on the Network in England, Wales and Scotland, with Northern Ireland seeing a 13% increase. And when it came to walking, Scotland saw a 15% increase, Wales 12%, England 12% and Northern Ireland 8%.

We estimate 3.3 million people used the Network during 2011 (compared to 3 million in 2010), making over 1.3 million trips everyday.

The National Travel Survey for Great Britain 2010 reported a further decline in walking with levels of cycling remaining static at about 2% of trips. Data for 2011 will not be published until late 2012.
Lower costs, no queues, and free exercise are driving change

Rising petrol prices, higher fares, frustration with traffic jams – all seem to be playing their part. But the fact that the National Cycle Network passes within a mile of over half of us, and that Sustrans has been extending safe walking and cycling routes to schools, to communities and to green spaces ensures that everyone can get about more on foot and bike.

One in five cyclists say that the money saved has encouraged them to get on their bike, nearly double the proportion in 2010. Saving money is far more important for men, however, with over a quarter of male cyclists citing money saved compared to less than 10% of women.

Fitness appears to be more of a motivator for women – two thirds of female cyclists say this is important compared to less than half of male cyclists.

Cycling is seen as a more efficient way of getting around, beating queues and bypassing traffic, with 34% of cyclists on the Network saying that this is an important reason for them using the Network, compared to just 20% the year before.

All this adds up to a lot fewer cars on our roads. 42% of cyclists on the Network could have used a car to make their journey, but chose not to. If all of these journeys had been made by car, 67 million more car journeys would have been made on our already busy roads.

Safe and pleasant surroundings are particularly important for getting people back on their bikes, and traffic-free sections are the perfect place to learn or rediscover cycling. Of those who say they are new to or returning to cycling on the Network, 91% agreed that feeling safe encouraged them to use the routes.

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2 Our surveys offer respondents a range of options as to what factors influence them in using the National Cycle Network. One of the choices is journey efficiency which we interpret as implying a more reliable, smooth and less congested journey.

3 Based on average car occupancy of 1.6 people per car trip. This is conservative since car occupancy reduces to 1.2 for commuting trips, and a large number of trips by bike on the Network are for commuting.
The National Commuting Network

Efficient, convenient, reliable, pleasant surroundings, safe – all these describe getting about on the National Cycle Network. No wonder people want to start their working day by commuting on the Network, collecting a few fresh air miles and some exercise along the way.

A quarter of all journeys on the Network in 2011 were to, or for, work, with cycling accounting for 80% of these.

98 million trips by bike were to work. If each of these had been made by car at average commuter occupancy, there would have been over 81 million additional car journeys on local roads.

And perhaps it’s the busyness of our roads that is converting people to commuting by bike or foot – three quarters of commuters say the Network’s convenience is why they use it.
Access for all

Usage of the Network is pretty evenly split between pedestrians and cyclists. Men make more trips than women, but as we extend walking and cycling routes into communities and link children to their schools, the number of women, older people, children and young people getting about on foot and bike is growing.

Women made a quarter of all cycling trips on the Network in 2011, and made 13% more trips by bike than the previous year. Overall women made over 176 million trips on the Network during 2011, but were more likely to be walking than cycling. Convenience, pleasant surroundings, personal fitness and safety are all factors influencing women to use the Network.

When it comes to cycling, 5% of women said they were new to or returning to cycling. The percentage of women using the Network to get to the shops increased, with twice as many choosing to get there by bike in 2011.

More than a quarter of users were over 55 – older people are increasingly making healthy, active lifestyle choices.

And there was an increase in 16-24 year olds using the Network – this age group made more than one in ten trips on the Network, perhaps indicating that car ownership is no longer an automatic step along the road to adulthood4. The increase was greatest amongst young women, particularly those cycling. Women aged 16-24 made 65% more trips by bike during 2011 than in the previous year. It would appear that much of this increase comes from walking and cycling to college or university, with 22 million trips in 2011 compared to 14 million in 2010.

Children continue to use the Network to get about and to play. We estimate that over 91 million trips were made by children to school and for pleasure on the Network in 2011 – just under a fifth of all trips.

Over one in 10 cyclists said they were new, returning or occasional cyclists. Personal health and fitness were key reasons people getting back on their bikes.

The Network is incredibly important for those without access to a car. Over 60% of users did not have access to a car to make their journey, and a quarter say they would not have made their trip if they had not been able to use the National Cycle Network.

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4 Car ownership has fallen markedly amongst this age group compared with figures from the 1990’s
The real cycling revolution  How the face of cycling is changing
Smarter, healthier, cleaner, cheaper

Nearly 60% of people in the UK live within a mile of the National Cycle Network. Safe walking and cycling routes should be available for everyone, and lower speed limits on streets where we live, work and play mean more people can choose to walk and cycle from their front door. And investment in walking and cycling is money well spent. Traffic-free walking and cycling routes pay back four times more than they cost over just a decade – a far higher return on investment than other transport initiatives, and over a much shorter period.

Using the World Health Organisation’s tool, developed with Sustrans, for measuring the health benefits of walking and cycling, the estimated annual health benefit to all those using the Network in 2011 was £442 million.

Walking and cycling to work, the shops, or school is the easiest way to incorporate physical activity into increasingly busy lives. No wonder 59% of adult users on the Network achieved their recommended levels of activity of half an hour or more on at least five days a week, compared to the UK average of just a third.

Zero emission journeys are the norm on the Network, with eight in 10 journeys made only by foot or bike. By contrast, if all the journeys made on the Network during 2011 had been by car, the potential CO₂ emitted during the year would have been 760,363 tonnes, at a cost of £40 million.

Since 2000, when we first began monitoring usage of the Network, we have seen an increase every year in levels of cycling and walking.

Cycling in particular has seen huge growth. Since 2000 the number of trips by bike on the Network has increased by over 500%. Over the same period official data shows that the proportion of trips made by bike has decreased by over 20%.

One of the reasons is that government statistics are likely to substantially underestimate data from traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network. This and the small number of cyclists in the sample overall means that the National Travel Survey is significantly under-recording levels of cycling. During 2011, for instance, 180 million trips by bike were made on traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network, nearly a fifth of the total number of cycling trips officially recorded in the whole of Britain during 2010. If all these trips were included in official data there would be a far more positive picture of cycling in the UK.

This is the learning from the National Cycle Network. If we want a cycling revolution, and to see more people walking, then we need to give people the choice by making it safer, more pleasant and far more convenient to get about on foot and bike.

The Times Cities Fit for Cycling Campaign suggests that 2% of the Highways Authority budget (£100 million a year) invested in cycling would massively increase cycling levels, particularly in urban areas where the majority of people live. In 2010 the Netherlands spent €30 per head on cycling, nearly £400 million nationally at today’s exchange rates.

4 Car ownership has fallen markedly amongst this age group compared with figures from the 1990’s http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-02.pdf

5 The National Travel Survey 2010 shows a downward trend in walking since 1995, with cycling having recovered slightly from an all time low in 2007, but with fewer trips by bike in 2010 than 1995.

6 The Fietsberaad reports that the Dutch Government now spends €487 million on cycling a year – with a population of about 16 million this equates to €30.

http://www.fietsberaad.nl/index.cfm?lang=nl&section=nieuws&mode=newsArticle&repository=Jaarlijks+487+miljoen+euro+voor+de+fiets – In 2009 a quarter of all trips in the Netherlands were made by bike.
Getting Manchester moving

Sustrans has recently completed work to provide a safe walking and cycling path along a canal towpath between Sale and Stretford in Greater Manchester, crossing the M60 and providing an alternative to using the busy and often congested A56 that runs parallel.

As a result the number of people using this section of National Cycle Network has risen dramatically.

Annual usage estimate 2008-2011

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td>57,080</td>
<td>117,531</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>22,359</td>
<td>98,304</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other users</td>
<td>2,056</td>
<td>29,873</td>
<td></td>
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The increase in commuting is particularly striking. A survey on the Stretford section of the route reveals that half of all trips are now made by people going to work, a ten-fold increase from just fewer than 8,000 to over 80,000.

Opening up of the canal towpath has also meant more children are able to walk and cycle the school run:

‘In the summer, we will definitely all be coming to school by bike, the kids like it because it’s a bit different, they have been hassling me to let them ride in for quite a while.’

‘I like walking to school by the canal as my brother is at senior school and he can get there by the canal too – on a Wednesday morning, when I come early to school for the breakfast club, we get to walk together for ten minutes. We have a chat, it’s not for very long, but it’s nice to come together.’

‘It took longer for me to get to school by the main roads: I used to have to set off at 07.45 am, now I leave at 08.30 am. It’s much better now that we can walk along the canal.’
Linking communities in rural Scotland

Sustrans has invested significantly in community links, like the one between Cambus and Alloa, creating a traffic-free walking and cycling route between two communities, which we’ve continued to develop and maintain.

The impact has been enormous. Women, children and older people are all benefiting from better access, with nearly half of users saying that without the new community route, they just wouldn’t have made the journey. And the kinds of journeys being made have changed – in amongst leisure and commuting journeys there are now trips to the shop, to school and to college.

Unsurprisingly, safety, the pleasant surroundings, and the convenience of walking and cycling now are the reasons most frequently given for using the route.

The estimated total annual usage between Cambus and Alloa in 2007 was 13,364 users.

The current estimated total annual usage between Cambus and Alloa is 58,041 users.

Cyclists and pedestrians

Gender

Age of users

7 Our funding partners for this work were Transport Scotland and Clackmannanshire Council.
Reconnecting the people of Newport

A former dead-end for cyclists has connected Newport City Centre and its new university campus to historical Caerleon and the campus there. A new bridge over the railway has also linked schools to residential areas and the centre of Caerleon.

The improvements have lead to a big increase in walking and cycling, and a survey of users at the Caerleon end of the link has revealed more journeys being made to work, to school and college, and for shopping. Children are making twice as many trips, and there has been a five-fold increase in walking and cycling by people over 65, particularly women.

The estimated total annual usage in Newport 2009 was 14,139 users.

The current estimated total annual usage in is 40,896 users.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4,881</td>
<td>12,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9,258</td>
<td>27,915</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age of users</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>5,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-64 years</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>5,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>10,735</td>
<td>30,203</td>
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The real cycling revolution How the face of cycling is changing
CASE STUDY

Cycling the school run

At just seven years-old, Fraser Dixon was presented with a trophy for completing 1,000 miles by bike to Exminster Community Primary. Now eight, he has cycled to school every single day since he was five, with dad Steve and with younger brother Matthew on the tag-a-long.

Fraser’s cycling exploits are well known by everyone in the school – he has received his bronze, silver and gold medals for cycling 100 times to school and won the Sustrans New Years Resolution competition. And he loves to cycle

“...cycling in the fresh air is healthy and helps save the earth... it also helps with my fitness for football, swimming and gymnastics.”

Steve agrees. “I tell him cycling is cheaper, Fraser comes home from school and tells me about the benefits of cycling, how it’s good for your health and the environment.”

After dropping Fraser off, Steve takes Matthew to his pre-school, so gets in a good 12 miles in a day. And it doesn’t stop there for the Dixons, who also get out and about on Sustrans’ nearby National Cycle Network:

“We always cycle at weekends – we recently did a lovely ride from Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton on the disused railway path. I do the shopping by bike and put it in my panniers, it is easier and cheaper as you don’t need to find a car park or get stuck in traffic – I just go along the canal.”

Jennet Young, Learning Support Officer at Cefn Cribwr Primary School in Bridgend, began cycling after her daughter started to cycle through Sustrans.

“It has inspired me to join her as I have bought a new bike through the bike-to-work scheme, as we enjoy riding to school as a family. I can now also join the rest of my family on bike picnics and general cycling.

“Also the current price of petrol has influenced my decision to move from using my car to a bike as the cost of fuel is taking up a large proportion of the family budget. Cycling has also improved my fitness and makes me feel better for taking more exercise.”
Getting back in the saddle

After cycling for the first time in years whilst on holiday, Josie Butler decided to buy a bike. However, as she felt she needed some company to increase her confidence, she joined Silver Cyclists, a group that meets once a week for a two hour ride.

The group was part of a project set up by Sustrans and Stockton Borough Council to run free cycling courses for people over 50, covering bike maintenance, advice on choosing the right bike and route planning and running guided rides on local sections of National Cycle Network.

Over the past year, Josie’s cycling skills and fitness have improved so that she can now manage a 20-mile round trip without feeling tired. Having suffered from osteoporosis, Josie was delighted when her GP said that she no longer needed medication, and that her increase in exercise had helped.

“I feel a lot better and I’ve lost a bit of weight too. The group was very welcoming – it was a good way to meet people and make friends. I really feel part of something and I look forward to our weekly rides.”

“Cycling gives you independence and the group has given me the confidence to do things I wouldn’t have thought of doing.”
The real cycling revolution
How the face of cycling is changing

A chain reaction?

The image of cycling is changing. Although we still hear a lot about cyclists being selfish, dangerous road users, research conducted by Sustrans with Orange with their Do Some Good app reveals a different perception. Fitness conscious, rebellious, environmentally aware – these are how those completing the survey saw cyclists. This backs up research published in 2010 that showed that 42% of the British public thought cycling was ‘cool’. Whilst most of those responding had access to a bike, only a minority were using them more than once a week.

Slower speeds and more dedicated investment in cycle lanes were what people wanted to enable them to get about more by bike. And whilst most people didn’t see themselves cycling everyday, they wanted to be able to get out by bike far more, with half wanting to be able to cycle to work.

Where from here?

The National Cycle Network is demonstrating that big increases in walking and cycling are possible, and that people will choose to get about on foot and bike if it’s safe and pleasant enough.

But with rising levels of obesity and ill health due to inactivity, and ever-increasing petrol prices, we urgently need to make sure everyone can chose to travel actively. We need to see two things happen to ensure people can make smarter travel choices:

• area-wide 20mph speed limits in residential and built-up areas
• dedicated investment in making walking and cycling the norm for local journeys.

42% of the British public thought cycling was ‘cool’.

7 A team of academics at the Bristol Social Marketing Centre at the University of the West of England commissioned YouGov to undertake a UK wide survey investigating the opinions about cycling amongst a representative UK sample of adults - 3,885 people aged 16-64 were interviewed in early summer 2010.
Methodology

This report is derived from a range of data sources. These include continuous cycle counters, route user surveys, manual user counts, other user surveys, and central government data sources. Sustrans would like to take this opportunity to thank all partners that have contributed to the National Cycle Network monitoring programme. Those requiring more information on any part of this report, or wishing to become involved in the programme should contact Sustrans’ Research and Monitoring Unit researchandmonitoring@sustrans.org.uk

Measuring changes in the levels of cycling
Sustrans has been collating data from local authority networks of automated continuous cycle counters throughout the UK for several years. This data is the basis for expressions of the changing levels of cycle use. A sample of over 300 counters formed the basis for the 2011 change measurement. An independent review of analytical techniques has been undertaken.

Estimating total National Cycle Network use
A complex model is used to generate estimates of National Cycle Network usage. Figures for usage on different types of routes, combined with the figures describing changes in levels of cycling, form the basis for national level aggregation. The process used this year is consistent with that used since 2005. Pedestrian use of road adjacent routes is not assigned as Network use. An independent review of the model has been undertaken.

Profiling the use of the Network
Profiles of National Cycle Network usage are derived from route user surveys. Sustrans holds a database of over 35,000 face-to-face interviews with route users collected over the past nine years. Survey response data is weighted on the basis of concurrent local user counts and national Network usage estimates, in-line with the recommendations of an independent review of the survey process.

Case studies
The case studies presented are derived from count, survey and evaluation data collected by Sustrans and our partners.

Future reporting
We are always seeking to improve our methodology for interpreting the data we collect. Over the coming years we particularly wish to:

• improve the sophistication of cycle usage estimation based on better modelling of count data.
• generate better ‘levels of change’ data for cycling activity.
• enhance our understanding of pedestrian activity on road-adjacent routes.
About Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We’re a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It’s time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. www.sustrans.org.uk

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Sustrans and the National Cycle Network

Sustrans began work on co-ordinating the National Cycle Network in 1995 having successfully secured the first grant made by the newly established lottery through the Millennium Commission.

Our ambition was to create space in every community in the UK that would enable people of all ages and abilities to walk and cycle for more of their everyday journeys. We wanted to demonstrate that it was possible to reverse the downward trend in walking and cycling levels if investment was made in creating the kind of public space that makes travelling by foot and bike pleasant, convenient and safe.

17 years later, and the Network now extends to 13,600 miles of signed routes with a third on traffic-free paths and the rest following quieter lanes or traffic-calmed roads. The number of trips by foot and bike has grown every year on the National Cycle Network since we began recording usage in 2000. The most popular sections are those that are traffic-free.

We work with every local authority and council in the UK to develop and maintain the Network which now passes within a mile of over half of the population of the UK. But to succeed in making walking and, particularly, cycling a realistic choice for more journeys we, and our many partners, need to do far more to bring a safe and pleasant environment to the streets outside our front door.

That’s why Sustrans is seeking to make 20 miles per hour or less the speed limit in residential and built-up areas, and why we are advocating far more dedicated investment to make walking and cycling a realistic choice for travelling to everyday destinations such as schools, stations, shops and work.
2 million people are now more active thanks to the National Cycle Network

125% increase in the number of children cycling to school every day

12.6% reduction in car trips across 60,000 contacted households with walking up 19% and cycling up 28%

420 million zero-carbon journeys made on the National Cycle Network

76,800 children now have the option of taking a safe route to school
“I feel like a free range kid – when I visit my friends I just jump on my bike, and I don’t find it hard at all. Even my parents ride to work now, and whenever we go to the park, it’s on our bikes, not in the car. In fact, me and my family go out a lot more than before.”

Sureya, aged nine
Our way of thinking

At Sustrans we make smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We’re a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

We believe it’s time we all began making smarter travel choices.

Make your move and work with Sustrans today.

www.sustrans.org.uk
info@sustrans.org.uk
0845 113 00 65

Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, Bristol BS1 5DD
During 2010 Sustrans benefited more people than ever before

We enabled more children to walk or cycle to school; we enabled more people to leave their cars at home and walk, cycle or use public transport instead; we enabled more people to increase their levels of physical activity by incorporating walking or cycling into their daily lives; we enabled more communities to traffic-calm the street outside their front door; and we brought the National Cycle Network even closer to home.

And everything we did offered a cost-effective solution to our major transport, health, environmental and community challenges. In the course of a year we were able to help people increase their levels of physical activity; reduce their carbon footprint; enable children to be more independent; and create safer communities, and all of this whilst improving people’s daily lives.

But of course none of this would be possible without the ongoing support of all our donors, funders and corporate partners on whose generosity we rely. My thanks, on behalf of our many beneficiaries, to all of you.

My thanks also to our volunteers who give so much of their time, enabling Sustrans to be even more effective in delivering our work within communities UK-wide.

The next couple of years will be challenging, so it is rewarding to reflect that 2010 was one of our most successful ever for delivering real and lasting change on the ground, enabling so many people to travel by foot, bike and public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. And we greatly look forward to working with all of you to continue to bring the benefits of smarter travel choices to even more people.

Malcolm Shepherd
Chief Executive, Sustrans
Sustrans and our health

Active journeys, every day

With the highest obesity levels in Europe, the UK is set to spend £50 billion a year dealing with chronic health-related conditions. Anyone got £50 billion to spare? At a time when only around a third of us are currently meeting the minimum recommendation of 30 minutes of activity five days a week, here’s what Sustrans did in 2010 to help more people get more active:

• An estimated 2.8 million people used the National Cycle Network in 2010. Based on our research, 71% of users felt the Network had helped them increase their level of physical activity
• 119 new safe walking and cycling routes were created for more than 256 schools
• Over 23,000 people were given practical support and greater opportunities to walk and cycle more often
• Targeted personalised travel planning led to walking levels increasing by 19% and cycling by 28%

Fear of traffic is the main reason many parents don’t let their children play outside or travel independently. Our car-centric environment means that roads are often busy and unattractive, so choosing to walk or cycle often isn’t people’s first choice. Breaking the vicious circle that sees children being driven to school for fear of traffic is essential to creating the next generation of healthier, happier, active travellers.

In 2010 the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence called on governments to invest in active travel to help prevent cardiovascular disease. They recommended the creation of attractive public spaces that encourage walking and cycling as an ideal way to achieve this. Sustrans is working with policy-makers and practitioners to create more walkable local environments. In 2010 we worked directly with schools, families, workplaces and communities to give them the information, skills and confidence to walk or cycle on a daily basis.

2 million
people are now more active thanks to the National Cycle Network
Whose health did we improve?

Children and young people

In 2010 our 60 school cycling experts worked with over 180,000 pupils at 1,000 schools in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. With fun bike events, classroom sessions, national standard training and safe bike storage, Sustrans’ Bike It and I Bike officers connected with children, teachers and parents to create a healthy and long-term cycling habit.

Daily cycling at Sustrans’ schools more than doubled from 4% to 9%, and the percentage of kids cycling regularly increased from 14% to 27%. The number of children who never cycle dropped from 72% to 53%, bringing a healthy and independent school journey to thousands of children for the very first time. 92% of head teachers agreed that Sustrans helped their pupils get more physical activity.

In the year that all schools were obliged to have a School Travel Plan, Sustrans dealt with thousands of enquiries, giving advice and information to support the delivery of these plans as well as advising on things like cycle parking grants, curriculum activities and the promotion of active school travel.

Families and households

In partnership with Socialdata, we published the results of our personalised travel planning project that contacted 60,000 households in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford. Having maps, timetables and knowledge of local walking and cycling routes and journey times is often all that is needed to encourage people to leave their cars at home more often and lead a more active lifestyle. Of those that took part, the number of trips made by walking increased an average of 19% and the number of trips by cycling increased by up to 33%.

In the same year we began work with a further 26,000 households in Ipswich, Broxbourne and Croxley Green in Hertfordshire, and expect to see similar results.
Older people

Active lifestyles benefit our mental well-being, as well as our physical health. Sustrans helped more than a thousand older people enjoy social walks and rides in 2010. With support from our volunteers, we organised led walks and rides for older and physically inactive people to benefit their health. We also held numerous travel advice sessions and gave people walking and cycling maps and other active travel information.

In East Lindsey Sustrans runs a project that provides opportunities for older people living near the Lincolnshire coast to become more active through a programme of health walks. So far 2,063 people have been involved in the project (1,280 in 2010). Last year the project was awarded a commendation by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). The award recognises how the project is achieving positive local change, and the effects that it has on the physical and mental health of people taking part.

In 2010, 8% of all trips made on the National Cycle Network were made by those over the age of 65.

Students

Cycling is a fast, cheap, convenient and healthy way for students to zip between home and study. Our phenomenally popular university cycling schemes in Leeds, Nottingham and Lincoln between them provided 655 loan bikes to students and staff in 2010. Our work demonstrates that if you provide a service for people where they need it, when they need it and at the right price point, uptake is guaranteed.

• 64% of people that completed our surveys in our Leeds project said they would not be able to cycle without their loan bike
• 5,594 people took part in bicycle related activities in Leeds in 2010. Everyone who completed our follow up survey intends to keep walking or cycling in the future.

100% of bike hire students intend to keep walking or cycling in the future
Louise Powell
Sustrans Bike It officer (Neath Port Talbot, South Wales)

By the end of 2010 Louise had helped more than 4,000 children gain the skills and confidence they needed in order to cycle to school independently. Through a series of practical workshops and school-wide events Louise has created a new, positive bicycle culture amongst pupils, parents and teachers at each school she has worked at.

“What really brings me satisfaction is the fact that I know what we’re doing here is not just about kids cycling to school, it’s actually about creating a habit of a lifetime in the valley communities - something that will keep them healthy as they get older and help them understand that we don’t have to use cars for all our journeys”.

125% increase in the number of children cycling to school every day
Sureya Bibi
Beneficiary of a Sustrans Active Travel project in London’s Tower Hamlets

Sureya was one of 12 people engaged in Sustrans’ ‘Ocean’s 11’ project to get housing estate residents travelling more actively. A young mother and primary school teacher, Sureya was keen to learn to ride a bike. She mastered her balance in a local school playground, practised gear changes in nearby parks and was soon making journeys on local roads. Sureya intends to cycle to work every day and to teach her son so they can ride together as a family.

“I was excited but nervous when I started, but I was really determined to learn. Initially it was just to have fun and as a form of exercise. I never seriously thought about cycling to work and things like that, but now I do. My next step is to get more on-road confidence. Cycling feels like a hidden thing that most people can’t access, or they don’t realise how easy it is to get to places on a bike. This should be opened up to the whole community.”

23,000

The number of people who benefited from our Active Travel walking, cycling and bike hire schemes UK-wide
How did we influence the debate?

In 2010 we contributed to government consultations and white papers including the Public Health White Paper, the NHS White Paper and the Lords Science and Technology Committee inquiry into obesity. Our submissions were circulated to our strategic partners in public health, to provide them with expert active travel content for their own wider-ranging submissions.

Sustrans was also invited by the European Commission to address the 13th European Health Forum, and Public Health Minister Anne Milton MP endorsed our new bridge over the river in Worcester that now enables people travelling on foot and bike to cross what used to be a major barrier without having to use the existing, but congested and busy, road-bridge.

In Wales we presented the case that eventually led to a new Cycling Bill for Wales, making it a legal duty for local authorities to provide cycle routes in key areas.

Workplaces

For many people, the commute to work is a distance that could be made comfortably on foot or by bike. If everyone could start the day with an active commute we’d be well on the way to a healthier society.

Sustrans helped several large employers promote active commuting to their staff through local travel plans.

According to an academic study commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, the NHS in Wales spends £1m every week treating obesity related illness.

In 2010 we worked across all eight NHS Local Health Boards in Wales to promote active commuting, by training workplace travel champions, producing walking and cycling maps, and holding Dr Bike and cycle training events.

Sustrans also supported the University of Wales Institute Cardiff to implement a range of measures to encourage staff to walk and cycle. Monitoring conducted by the Institute found that implementing simple measures such as cycle training, bike buddying, and promotional events has led to a 32% reduction in the number of days lost to sickness absence at the Institute between 2008 and 2010. The Institute only needs to reduce the total number of days lost annually to sickness absence by as little as 28 days (0.3%) to result in a cost saving through the project, rather than a spend.

At the Cobalt Business Park in the North East, we employed a workplace active travel advisor to spend a year amongst the 800 members of staff. The advisor monitored employees' travel habits and then created tailor made activities and events to encourage walking and cycling amongst employees and people living locally. In July, 10 organisations took part in a week-long virtual bike race, competing to see which department could make the most commuter trips by bike. There were 2,193 journeys to work by bike in 20 days (double that if you count the journeys home again too).

Similar events in Stockton saw over 100 Teesside residents walk and cycle more than 9,000 miles in a month and the number of people who commuted by bicycle daily or several times a week increased from 32% to 45%.

What we could do with more help

For the equivalent of less than £1 per person in the UK, we would be able to provide a school cycling officer for 12,000 schools. This would enable the next generation to immediately begin travelling actively, safely and independently, instilling a sustainable travel habit for life.
Giving people travel choices

Choosing to leave the car at home is not always easy, with options limited by factors including road safety, the quality of public transport services and accessibility. Public space that encourages increased walking, cycling and public transport use encourages social cohesion and a more defined sense of community. At Sustrans, we insist on engaging local communities directly in our work, to ensure that any new or improved travel options are effective.

- Residents in 11 streets in England and Wales felt that their streets were safer and more attractive after redesigning them with Sustrans
- Sustrans’ new walking and cycling bridge in Cardiff Bay carried 64,000 pedestrians and 16,000 cyclists across the Bay in a four month period
- Safer walking and cycling journeys to school were created for over 76,800 children

Sustrans and our communities
How did we engage communities?

People-powered urban design

Sustrans’ ground-breaking DIY Streets pilot project was completed in 2010. 600 families in 11 streets helped make the space outside their front door safer and more attractive by implementing measures designed to solve their own unique traffic issues. Simple and affordable devices like road surface decoration, introducing planters and greenery, and locally inspired artworks act as psychological traffic-calming measures that influence the way people view road use. Ultimately this leads to slower traffic speeds and an improved perception of safety and community.

Ellacombe Road in Torquay saw actual traffic speeds reduce from 25mph to 18mph and 57% of residents now feel that their street is safe for children to play on. And the results aren’t just focussed on speed and safety. Of equal importance is the fact that 40% of people living on Ellacombe Road now spend more time with their neighbours, enhancing the sense of community on the street. Similar results have been seen across all our street redesign projects.

25-18mph
the reduction in traffic speed on Ellacombe Road, Torquay
Local inspiration, local art

Sustrans’ National Cycle Network hosts the UK’s largest collection of free outdoor artworks. Most are inspired by local people, history and landscapes. This approach is continued in our street design projects, which feature artistic gateways, sculptures or mosaics developed by the people living there.

In 2010 we also opened three iconic portrait benches to create inspiring resting points along new walking and cycling networks. When complete, the series of portrait benches will form part of the biggest development of public portraiture for many years, featuring local community heroes chosen by local people for local people.

Our arts team also helped to conduct an innovative ‘sensory mapping’ project where we asked children to draw pictures representing the sights, sounds and smells that they experience on their journey to school. The static imagery produced by those travelling by car was in stark contrast to the bright and varied pictures produced by children who walked and cycled to school. The project will now extend to our work with children and schools.

In 2010, arts practice Liminal was commissioned by Sustrans to investigate the perception of sound and the effect of unwanted sounds on an individual’s psychology. Their research included a four day Sound Cycle Ride from Worcester to Cricklade, which invited local people to listen to the landscape and record their perceptions. Their final proposals for a sculptural installation on the National Cycle Network won the prestigious Performing Right Society’s Foundation New Music Award and the installation will be constructed in 2011.

Providing access as well as mobility

Getting people to their everyday destinations by foot or bike is at the heart of what Sustrans does. We’re currently at the helm of the largest bridge construction project since the industrial revolution. When complete, these bridges (which cross busy roads, railways and rivers) will create new walking and cycling networks, extending the National Cycle Network deep into communities, offering smarter daily travel choices for as many as six million people.

In 2010, we added dozens of new walking and cycling bridges, crossings and links to the National Cycle Network. Worcester’s Diglis Bridge is recording 600 trips every weekday, with almost triple that at weekends, and a new path in north Birmingham now helps hundreds of pupils get to school under their own steam. A more challenging undertaking was Cardiff’s Pont y Werin bridge. Completing a 10km shared-use route around Cardiff’s redeveloped bay, the bridge carried 64,000 pedestrians and 16,000 cyclists across the bay between November 2010 and March 2011.

In 2010 we constructed 119 new safe walking and cycling routes for 256 schools. We linked the schools to other local paths and the National Cycle Network. This work means that a safer school journey is now possible for around 77,000 children.

Providing skills for the long-term unemployed

From April to December 2010, we worked with 182 long-term unemployed people who helped us refurbish over 230 miles of the National Cycle Network. They all gained skills and received training to help them secure jobs in the future, and as of January 2011, 39 of them were in regular employment. Following their experience with Sustrans, 84% of trainees felt better prepared about going into the workforce and 52% felt happier.

84% of trainees felt better prepared about going into the workforce and 52% felt happier
Ian Williams and family

Family living in Somerset Street, Cardiff

Somerset Street used to suffer litter and speeding traffic, so Sustrans worked with its residents on a new traffic-calming approach. Simple design changes (like placing planters and artworks in strategic spots to break up drivers’ sightlines) mean that traffic speeds are now slower. The street is also more colourful and attractive; neighbours know each other better; and parents are more confident about letting their children play in the street.

“On a sunny day you will see children playing, and on a wet day the street is brightened up by colourful flowers. Most importantly the residents, children and adults alike who took part can say we did this because of Sustrans’ DIY Streets”.

67% of people living on Sustrans’ DIY Streets now describe their street as greener and more attractive
A year in pictures

January
Northern Ireland celebrates 15 years of the National Cycle Network

February
The Future Jobs Fund project is set-up to upgrade more than 230 miles of the Network

March
Hundreds of UK schools join our cycle to school race

July
Thousands pledge sustainable journeys through our campaign

August
Cardiff Bay’s new bridge is a hit with walkers and cyclists

September
The new Way of the Roses coast-to-coast route gets terrific coverage
April
A Portrait Bench on Neath Port Talbot’s new traffic-free path is unveiled

May
Scotland’s schools team publishes its Hands Up travel survey results

June
Sustrans’ Fresh Air Miles rides raise funds to help continue our work

October
Sustrans’ university bike loan schemes prove hugely popular

November
Beech Croft Road now a safer street thanks to residents’ initiative

December
Use of Worcester’s new Diglis Bridge proves hugely popular
Steve Pirone
General Manager, Worcester's Diglis House Hotel

In 2010, Sustrans’ new route and iconic bridge linked central Worcester to the nearby countryside. This opened the area up for tourists and locals, and boosted the local economy. At the Diglis House Hotel, business hours have increased due to increased custom and they are seeking permission for a new riverside bar. Manager Steve is now working with local groups to run guided walks and rides by the river.

“Sustrans’ new route brought opportunities we wouldn’t usually have explored – and it’s not only about the hotel. Being able to employ more staff has a positive knock-on effect throughout the local economy. We’re experiencing real benefits and I’m sure other businesses near the route are, too. Every weekend our garden is absolutely jam-packed and, while you can put some of it down to the weather, it’s also down to us being more accessible.”

6 million

The number of people that will benefit from Sustrans’ new walking and cycling bridges, paths and projects UK-wide
How did we get people to act?

In summer 2010, thousands of people across the UK attended 70 local fundraising events to mark the 15th birthday of the National Cycle Network. Organised by our brilliant volunteers, these rides and walks raised valuable funds for Sustrans and increased awareness of our work locally.

In October, our Quality Streets campaign invited people to write to their local councillor to ask for 20mph speed limits as the first step to achieving a quality street. Quality Streets has so far generated 2,645 letters and prompted meetings between Sustrans and local authority partners about how communities can put people – rather than cars – back at the heart of their street.

What we could do with more help

Speeding traffic is rated as a significantly greater problem than all other antisocial behaviours, with 43% of the population regarding speeding traffic as a ‘very’ or ‘fairly big’ problem in their area. Our street redesign projects address this issue directly and do it in a way that is both affordable and led by the communities themselves. As things stand we simply cannot keep up with the demand from streets that need our help to either get things moving with their local authority, or want our advice on street design and planning. With a bit more cash we’d be able to help them along the way to creating their own tailor-made neighbourhood environment.

Utilising local knowledge, skills and relationships

Sustrans has 3,000 dedicated volunteers, without whom we wouldn’t be able to deliver the range and quality of services that we do. Most volunteer within their community to maintain and sign local stretches of National Cycle Network. Their familiarity with local routes and users makes them ideally placed to monitor routes and alert Sustrans and local authorities to any hazards or safety issues. During 2010’s floods and wintry snaps, their help was invaluable in pinpointing and clearing sections of routes that had become impassable.

Over the course of the year nearly 100 volunteer groups went out and surveyed stretches of National Cycle Network. They reported back on route alignments and, crucially, they identified local access points. Access points are the places where people can join longer stretches of Network. By identifying these points and including them on our mapping services, people are now able to quickly see how they can get on the Network most easily. All in all our volunteers surveyed 2,000 miles of traffic-free sections of the Network and identified around 1,000 new access points and over half of them told us that the experience had increased their sense of community.

Sustrans' fantastic volunteers are worth the equivalent of having an extra 100 full-time staff for a year.

Targeting our projects for maximum impact

Across the UK in 2010, Sustrans ran 19 Active Travel projects, to enable people of all ages and all abilities to be more active and make smarter travel choices. In Nottingham, we worked with the hospitals and university staff and students on an affordable, annual bike hire scheme, which was snapped up by 300 people. In London we concluded our work with families on an estate in Tower Hamlets, to increase active travel levels. Amongst the surveyed participants, there was a 56% increase in the number of people who walked on 5-7 days a week.

These schemes and others utilised cycle training and maintenance; led walks and rides; bike recycling schemes; ‘virtual bike race’ competitions; gardening and conservation activities; and practical support to encourage more than 23,000 people in workplaces and communities to fit more activity into their lives.

Through these targeted community projects:
• 166 tonnes of carbon dioxide will be saved per year by the 1,113 respondents to our follow up surveys. This is equivalent to removing 63 average sized cars from the road each year
• the number of respondents reporting that they walked for travel on average for one hour a week or more increased from 78% to 84% and the number reporting they cycled for travel increased from 20% to 29%
Decarbonising local travel

The transport sector contributes around a quarter of the UK’s total CO₂ emissions. Progress on reducing its dependence on fossil fuels is slow, with emphasis placed on technological breakthroughs and electric vehicles.

Every Briton travels an average 1,300 miles a year on journeys under five miles. By 2020, if we could increase levels of cycling from the current 2% to 20%, and walking levels from 34% to 40% for these short journeys, the annual reduction in CO₂ emissions would be nearly four million tonnes.

We believe that a significant and affordable move away from fossil fuels could be made immediately, using existing infrastructure and technology. Our current projects demonstrate what could be achieved tomorrow through simple and affordable measures. In 2010:

• The National Cycle Network carried 420 million zero-carbon journeys with a potential carbon dioxide saving of nearly 657,000 tonnes
• Personal car trips were reduced by at least 12% in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford and if our work in Watford was replicated across the UK, we estimate that we’d be able to save around 8.5 million tonnes of CO₂ each year
• The number of children cycling to school every day more than doubled at Sustrans schools

1,035 miles was the average reduction in annual household car mileage achieved in our personalised travel planning work in Watford
How did we reduce transport’s impacts?

Reducing personal car use (and CO₂)

Sustrans (with partners Socialdata) delivers the UK’s most successful travel behaviour change programme. Sustrans’ work with households on personalised travel planning consistently reduces personal car use by at least 10%. By contacting 60,000 households in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford we saw relative reductions in personal car trips of between 12% and 13%. In addition, average annual household mileage was reduced by as much as 1,035 miles in Watford, with corresponding increases in trips by foot, bike and public transport.

And the truth is that achieving these results is as simple as giving people good travel information. By working directly with households to provide them with relatively simple bits of information such as local travel maps, bus timetables and advice about buying or repairing bikes, people were able to identify the journeys that they could easily change. Our baseline surveys in these areas revealed that many short car trips could be replaced by walking, cycling and public transport trips. They also showed that the majority of people would support measures favouring walking, cycling and public transport, even if these were to the disadvantage of car users.

In terms of carbon, we estimate that if Watford’s success were replicated UK-wide, we’d be able to save around 8.5 million tonnes of CO₂ each year.
21st-century zero-carbon transport

No, not electric cars: the National Cycle Network (which celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2010). Carrying the equivalent of a third of the journeys made on our rail networks and stretching six times as far as our motorways, the Network is an integral part of our transport mix. It’s how millions of us get around on a daily basis.

The Network now extends to over 13,000 miles and passes within a mile of 58% of the population. In 2010:
• 420 million walking and cycling journeys were made on the Network, a like for like annual increase of 3%
• the potential carbon dioxide saving of all the journeys made on the Network was nearly 657,000 tonnes
• 7% of cyclists were new to, or returning to, cycling
• a quarter of all the journeys made on the Network were commuting trips

How did we more than double cycling to school?

A 2010 Sustrans survey found that almost half of children want to cycle to school, but only about 4% currently cycle to school on a daily basis. The next generation need the skills and confidence to cycle to school if the UK is to see a significant shift to sustainable travel by 2020. In 2010, Sustrans’ 60 talented school cycling officers provided a positive experience of cycling to around 180,000 children. Each of them works with around 18 schools a year at varying intensity levels depending on the schools’ progress. They create enthusiasm and offer practical skills to the whole school community by running activities including cycle training, ‘Bike Breakfasts’, competitions, assemblies and curriculum work. Parents and teachers are also encouraged to get involved, to help normalise cycling and to alleviate some of their natural safety concerns.

Sustrans’ School Mark exists to reward schools that strive to create a pro-cycling culture that can sustain itself when our officers move on. By the end of 2010, 324 schools had received their Bronze award, and one a Silver.

In 2010 our school cycling projects more than doubled the number of children that cycle to school daily. They reduced the number of children who never cycle to school by 27%, in-effect introducing thousands of children to the joys of cycling the school run for the very first time in their lives.

Our school cycling officers reduced the number of children who never cycle to school by more than a quarter
Susan Niven
Teacher and school cycling champion

Brunstane Primary school in Edinburgh has a Sustrans I Bike officer, Lynn, who helps to increase cycling to school. Susan helps Lynn deliver cycling activities, and has seen cycling’s profile increase dramatically. Brunstane now offers Cycle Training to Primary 6 children in curriculum time and runs an after-school bike club. The school community celebrated the opening of its new storage with a family bike breakfast.

“Since Sustrans’ I Bike started, pupils are interested in all cycling activities, with an increase in daily cycling and many ‘non-cyclists’ now cycling regularly! With Lynn’s help we secured funding to set up a bike club, providing pool bikes for those who don’t have access to one. We now aim to build on the cycling culture Sustrans has created here, to encourage more pupils to cycle to school.”

46% of children would like to cycle to school
26,700

The number of households in Ipswich, Broxbourne and Croxley Green targeted by Sustrans’ travel planning programme in 2010

Brian Peters
Resident of Ipswich

Brian was visited by one of Sustrans’ local travel planning experts. They gave him a pack of maps of local cycling and walking routes and local bus and train information, to increase his awareness of local travel alternatives.

“We use all the info in the travel pack - bus timetables and so forth. I thought it was excellent. In fact I recommended several friends to apply for it because it was so helpful. If we hadn’t got the timetables, we probably wouldn’t have ventured further afield on the buses, but we soon realised how easy it was and how convenient the times were. Sustrans changed the way we travel”.

(Photograph is of another beneficiary in Ipswich)
How did we influence the emissions argument?

In June our Change Your World campaign saw more than 5,000 people pledge to swap one of their regular car journeys for a walk, bike ride or trip on the bus or train. The total length of these pledged journeys was 176,782 miles – enough to get around the world seven times and the equivalent of saving over 51 tonnes of CO₂. Participants also emailed their Member of Parliament or Assembly Member, asking them to take action against climate change and to encourage sustainable and eco-friendly transport.

In the build up to last year’s English election we presented our call to action, More Haste, Less Speed, to leading political figures. The call outlined the steps that the UK needs to take so that 80% of local journeys are made by foot, bike or public transport by 2020. Each of the main political parties in England made a commitment to increase support for smarter travel choices in their election manifestos. The call was also picked up by English transport authorities who are now working with us to deliver sustainable transport options for their areas.

We worked closely with the Department for Transport on the development of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, available to local transport authorities in England (outside of London). We secured changes to the guidance so that local authorities can collaborate on portfolio bids with charities and other organisations, giving greater opportunity for expertise and specialism in transport projects.

What we could do with more help

The National Cycle Network is a fantastic success story with usage growing by more than 400% over its lifetime. What we want to do now is make it as easy as possible for people to access the Network, by bringing it within a mile of everyone in the UK. This will mean that the entire population will be able to make sustainable journeys directly from their front door.

Enhancing biodiversity on our Network

Habitat fragmentation is widely recognised as a major threat to biodiversity in the UK due to the increased vulnerability of small or isolated populations of wildlife; particularly in the face of climate change. As an organisation that promotes sustainability Sustrans aims is to maximise the beneficial impacts of National Cycle Network routes for biodiversity.

4,000 of the 13,000 miles of Network consist of dedicated pathways away from roads that run through parks, woodlands and green spaces. These ‘greenways’ are often corridors of natural habitat that typically run for many miles. They connect to a variety of green areas, run close to or through designated sites for nature conservation, and transect other linear features such as rivers, canals and railways. Since the creation of our Biodiversity Action Plan in 2007 we have been working on a number of local schemes to survey and restore the biodiversity along our greenways.

In 2010 six staff training sessions were undertaken across the UK to help minimise the ecological impacts of new route development and managing our existing routes for wildlife. Across Wales we have been recruiting Wildlife Champions to audit the wildlife along their greenways. This programme was launched in 2010 and recruited twenty-six surveyors in the first year as a trial for a wider biodiversity programme we hope to launch across the UK. We have also been involved with various projects to restore biodiversity along our greenways. We are working with Butterfly Conservation to bring back the small blue butterfly in Warwickshire; supporting the York Greenways Champions to enhance habitats along their city greenways; and volunteers are maintaining a valuable wetland habitat in Comber, Northern Ireland. Volunteers elsewhere have been involved in work days to manage hedgerows, create a community orchard and put up bat and bird boxes.

We are working to restore the biodiversity along greenways in order to create a network of natural habitats.
Sustrans maintained a good level of income last year in a difficult funding environment. The future will continue to present us with many challenges. If Sustrans is to continue to deliver life changing results, we have to broaden our funding base. We are actively seeking partnerships to support local schemes and small scale projects, or town or city-wide programmes. As this report demonstrates, Sustrans benefits people’s lives directly. More than 95% of our income goes into practical project delivery.

If you believe that the work Sustrans delivers is valuable and would like to help us achieve our vision of a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment, please get in touch. There is a list of local contacts on the back page of this Review and there are many opportunities to support Sustrans financially and to work in partnership with us.

For a full financial breakdown please download our annual report from www.sustrans.org.uk

Where our money came from:

Total income 2009/10

£40.7m

Charitable donations (£2,869,734)
Big Lottery Fund for health promotion and community projects (£8,094,651)
Fees and grants from local authorities and governments (£26,330,739)
Other (including NHS Primary Care Trusts and shop sales) (£3,420,259)

How that income was spent:

Total expenditure 2009/10

£39.8m

Creating and maintaining walking and cycling routes (£26,596,000)
Enabling children and young people to travel safely and independently (£5,810,000)
Personalised travel planning for households (£1,188,000)
Street re-design projects (£285,000)
Increasing levels of active travel amongst communities and workplaces (£5,201,000)
Fundraising (£648,000)
Governance (£56,000)
Noel Mitchell
Sustrans volunteer ranger, Omagh, Co Tyrone

Noel is one of our 2,500 volunteer rangers. Each looks after a local section of the National Cycle Network, tidying litter, maintaining signs and alerting us to any issues. Noel’s stretch of National Route 92 runs near the road into Omagh, then follows the river Camowen for two miles. During 2010’s harsh winter, temperatures of almost -17º caused widespread freezing. In the thaw and floods that followed, Noel’s section of route was blocked with tons of ice floes. Working with local rangers and authorities, Noel dealt with the ice within days for the benefit of the route’s many daily users.

“I’m deeply committed to Sustrans and the work I do on the route, as I know that more everyday cycling and walking can make a big difference to people’s health and their local environment.”
We’d like to thank…

A huge amount of people, project partners, local authorities and trusts – alongside the bike industry and many other organisations – were instrumental in helping us achieve our goals in 2010. Together, we delivered focused, relevant and value-for-money projects for local communities and nationally on the Network, to benefit millions of people.

In 2010, we were particularly grateful for the support of Cycling England and the cycling community it represented; the Scottish Government; the Welsh Assembly Government; Transport for London and the Big Lottery Fund. If you or your organisation was involved at any level, thank you from Sustrans’ beneficiaries across the UK.

Our volunteers

Special thanks and appreciation goes to our vital volunteers – the men and women on the ground who make our work happen. They keep us in touch with developments and help us to solve local needs, both on the Network and through our other practical and community projects. So, a hundred thousand thank yous to our thousands of volunteers. We simply couldn’t do it without you.

Our Patrons

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The Rt Hon Sir George Young MP

Our Honorary President

John Grimshaw CBE

Key Contacts

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Simon Craft-Stanley, Fundraising Director
Huw Davies, Technical Director
Melissa Henry, Communications Director
Peter Lipman, Policy Director
Tiffany Newman, Human Resources Director
James Ryle, Director of Projects and Innovation
Andy Wistow, Director of Nations and Regions
Our Board
Marian Lauder (Chair)
Gordon Clarke
Les Cullen
Chris Curling
Nigel Gibbons
Chris Payne
Lester Willmington

Our major funders
Charitable Trusts and Foundations: 29th May 1962


Landfill Operators and Distributive Environmental Bodies: Fife Environment Trust/ Gloucestershire Environmental Trust Company/ Grundon/ Lancashire Environmental Fund/ SiTA Trust/ The Ulster Wildlife Trust/ Veolia ES Cleanaway Mardyke Trust/ Viridor Credits Environmental Company/ WREN


Get in touch

With UK-wide coverage, Sustrans is well placed to partner your local projects or deliver national schemes. Our range of successful, value for money services – from infrastructure to behaviour change programmes – can help you tackle local travel challenges and meet your health, environment and community engagement objectives.

If you are interested in supporting our work financially please get in touch with us on 0117 926 8893. To speak to a Sustrans regional manager about project partnerships near you, please telephone your closest office and we’ll make sure the right ears are listening.

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Moving forward
A year of delivering smarter travel choice
Foreword
by Malcolm Shepherd, Chief Executive of Sustrans

Transport is at a cross-roads. There are big opportunities to greatly increase travel choice whilst achieving far better value for money; to involve communities in transport decisions that affect their daily lives; and to begin the rapid transition to low-carbon and healthy travel.

And in all of these Sustrans plays a role. Last year, working with communities and partners, Sustrans enabled many millions of people to make smarter travel choices.

We built on proven initiatives like the National Cycle Network and started work on many new, walking and cycling networks. Inspired and supported by local people, these networks will give safe, direct access to shops, work, schools, libraries and post-offices.

We extended innovative ways of enabling people to leave their cars behind. We worked with universities to hire bikes to students, with employees to enable people to leave their cars behind on the daily commute, and with people at home to give them information to enable local journeys to be walked, cycled or made by public transport. We piloted a new way of empowering residents to redesign the street outside their front doors, reducing traffic speeds and making them safe for people to travel under their own steam. Initiatives like these are effective at extending travel choice, are quick to implement, and offer exceptional value for money. They can be replicated locally, or scaled-up to work regionally and nationally.

With this kind of smarter investment we could double the number of local trips being made on foot, bike and public transport over the next decade. By 2020 we would reap the benefits of reduced congestion and carbon dioxide emissions, improved access, increased physical activity, and more pleasant neighbourhoods.

The following pages show what one charity working in partnership can achieve in a year. Imagine what could be achieved if all transport spending was focused on enabling people to make smarter travel choices.

Malcolm Shepherd

About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity that’s enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and our environment.

Our mission is to influence practice and shape policy so everyone can travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

• we’re a catalyst – we make smarter travel choices possible
• we campaign – we make smarter travel choices desirable
• we influence – we make smarter travel choices inevitable.

This report is just a snapshot of what Sustrans achieved in 2009. To find out about all our work visit: www.sustrans.org.uk
Value-for-money solutions to expensive transport challenges

Congestion, physical inactivity, carbon dioxide emissions, pollution, noise and accidents are amongst the wider impacts of a transport system dominated by car use.

A recent Government report reveals that in urban England the cumulative cost of these effects is £38.1 – £48.7 billion (or up to £56 billion when expanded to the UK)\(^{(1)}\).

This is more than the UK’s income from vehicle excise duty and revenue from fuel sales, which raised £37.1 billion in 2007/08\(^{(2)}\).

With investment in walking, cycling and public transport, governments could immediately start reducing these costs to our wider economy.

How Sustrans helped to reduce transport’s burden on the economy in 2009:

The National Cycle Network carried 407 million journeys in 2009. Cycling trips had a total health benefit of £288 million, walking trips a potential health benefit of £96 million\(^{(3)}\), and, if each journey replaced a car trip, the potential carbon savings were worth £32 million\(^{(4)}\). These values far exceed the cost of developing walking and cycling paths.

At a benefit to cost ratio of nearly 8:1, 40,000 households received local walking, cycling and public transport information. This resulted in travel behaviour change and a reduction in car use of between 460 and 875 miles per household per year\(^{(5)}\).

At a benefit to cost ratio of nearly 4:1 over just ten years (the current appraisal period for transport schemes is 60 years), 2,000 schools benefited from new walking and cycling routes offering children, and the whole community, a safer journey by foot or bike. These benefits are mainly derived from improved health thanks to increased physical activity.

£280 million in petrol costs was potentially saved by users of the National Cycle Network had each trip replaced a car trip\(^{(6)}\). Source: Single carriageway road: House of Commons, 2006 Written Answers to Questions [30 October 2006] Column 37W, Road Funding, Chris Grayling/Dr Ladyman.
Personal car use has reduced by up to 14% across areas where Sustrans and our partners Socialdata, have worked with households on our travel behaviour change programme, TravelSmart. Average household car mileage has been reduced by up to 875 miles per year on pre-project levels.

Whilst the national trend for average car mileage has decreased in recent years, household mileage has remained fairly constant as the number of cars per household has risen.

During 2009 Sustrans engaged with people living in 40,000 households in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford to give them the information they needed in order to leave their cars behind.

The baseline data in these three towns revealed that many short car trips could already be replaced by trips by foot, bike and public transport, with cycling offering the greatest potential for change. This replicates the findings from the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns.

Sustrans will publish the results of our work in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford at the end of 2010.
Decarbonising local travel

In the UK 55% of total transport emissions comes from personal car use\(^9\) with more than half of all car journeys being under five miles\(^9\) (and many being less than a mile). Only 2% of journeys less than five miles are currently cycled\(^10\).

Evidence suggests that with the right investment in urban areas, 9 out of 10 journeys could be made on foot, bike and public transport\(^8\).

In Britain, on average, everyone travels about 1,300 miles a year on journeys of less than five miles\(^11\). If by 2020, we could increase cycling levels from 2% to 20% and walking levels for these shorter journeys from 34% to 40%, the annual reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 would be nearly 3.9 million tonnes valued at approximately £236 million a year\(^4\).

How Sustrans helped to reduce personal carbon footprints in 2009:

Work began on new walking and cycling networks in 30 communities overcoming barriers including roads, rivers and railways to give people easier access to schools, work and green spaces. In the next two years, a further 49 communities will benefit from similar schemes and in total up to six million people UK-wide will be able to choose to walk and cycle their everyday journeys, potentially saving 80,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually at a value of over £4 million\(^4\).

Thanks to our work with an additional 40,000 households with the successful travel behaviour change programme TravelSmart, we expect car use across our target populations in Exeter, Lowestoft and Watford to decrease by 10% or more. If the results from Watford were replicated UK-wide, this approach could save around 8.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

Sustrans’ National Cycle Network carried over one million zero-carbon journeys every day. If each of these journeys replaced a car trip, this is a potential carbon dioxide saving of 625,000 tonnes a year, the equivalent annual emissions of more than 227,000 cars.
A nationally important network for local journeys

Sustrans began work on creating the National Cycle Network in 1995. It now extends to 12,600 miles, passing within a mile of 57% of the UK’s population.

During 2009 on the National Cycle Network:

• 407 million walking and cycling journeys were made, a like for like increase of nearly 6% on the previous year

• 208 million of these journeys were by bike, and 199 million by foot

• our research suggests that during 2009 the National Cycle Network was used by 1.5 million cyclists and 1.6 million pedestrians

• 11% of cyclists were new to, or returning to, cycling

• 95 million commuting trips were made – nearly a quarter of all the journeys made on the Network

• 79% of trips were made by foot or bike alone – zero carbon from beginning to end

• 87% of users used the Network because it felt safe and offered the most convenient route

• 42% of users got at least 30 minutes of physical activity on at least five days a week – the recommended levels suggested by health experts12

• 10% of all trips were made by those over the age of 65

• 17% of users described themselves as black and minority ethnic

• women users increased by 8% (a greater increase than male users), making over 146 million trips in 2009.

The National Cycle Network carries about a third of the number of journeys made on the UK’s rail network. This generates huge economic benefits in terms of health and carbon savings.

Despite this, it is the UK’s only national transport network with no obligation by government to support it, develop it or maintain it, either at a local or national level.

Since Sustrans began monitoring in 2000, the Network has grown in length by 200%, and its usage has grown even more quickly with cycling increasing by 400% and walking by 300%.

The Network is a catalyst proving that when you create the right environment for people of all ages and abilities to walk and cycle, people will use it, and will often choose to leave their car behind.
Improving health through active travel

Obesity and related chronic conditions are predicted to cost the UK nearly £50 billion a year by 2050\(^{13}\). In 2010, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued guidance on preventing cardiovascular disease, calling on governments to invest in active travel\(^{14}\). This followed previous guidance calling for greater investment in creating public space to encourage walking and cycling because of their major contribution to public health\(^{15}\).

There is significant evidence of a relationship between increased physical activity, improved cognitive performance and achievement in children\(^{16}\). Evidence also points to the link between physical activity and people’s perception of their own well-being and quality of life\(^{17}\).

Enabling people to walk and cycle more for everyday journeys is one of the easiest ways of introducing physical activity into our daily lives. If everyone could choose to walk or cycle for more journeys, the nation’s health would improve, with considerable savings to the NHS and wider economy.

How Sustrans helped to improve personal health in 2009:

42% of adult users of the National Cycle Network got at least 30 minutes of physical activity on at least five days a week – the recommended levels suggested by health experts\(^{12}\). On average only 34% of adults in England are achieving these recommended levels of activity.

The percentage of children who never cycle to school dropped by 17 percentage points in schools where Sustrans worked. We worked with 130,000 children who had a positive experience of cycling, and 94% of head teachers said that this had helped pupils become more physically active.

The total health benefit to cyclists using the National Cycle Network during 2009 was worth £288 million when valued using the World Health Organisation’s Health Economic Assessment Tool.

Moving forward: A year of delivering smarter travel choice
Creating the low-carbon, active travellers of tomorrow

Enabling children to walk and cycle from an early age helps establish healthy, low carbon travel for life. In the Netherlands children cycle for a third of the journeys they make, and people over the age of 65 for nearly a quarter of all journeys. By contrast British children cycle for 2% of all journeys, and those over 65 for just 1% \( ^{18} \).

The lifetime carbon and health value of creating sustainable travel habits early is money well spent. Focusing on giving children the skills and confidence they need to walk and cycle the school journey is a good way of enabling children to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives whilst enabling them to travel independently for the other journeys they make.

During 2009 we worked with 130,000 children to increase levels of cycling to school. At Sustrans’ Bike It schools the number of children cycling to school every day more than trebled to 10%. The number of children who began cycling to school was even more impressive with the percentage of children who never cycled to school dropping from 73% to 56%.

Creating safer environments for children around schools also benefits the whole community. During 2009, 2,000 schools worked with Sustrans to develop new walking and cycling links, but since schools are often in the heart of their community, the benefits extended far beyond the school journey, enabling many more people to become low-carbon, active travellers.

A typical example is a new walking and cycling route created to benefit the 1,500 pupils at two schools in Redcar:

- overall usage has increased to 145,000 from 106,000 trips – a 37% increase
- trips to school have increased by 300% to nearly 26,000
- the path is now used to reach a wider variety of destinations and the number of commuting trips has trebled
- nearly a third of respondents could have used a car for the journey but chose not to
- the proportion of users who have no car in their household has doubled
- the percentage of users who have had no physical activity in the last week has halved.
Empowering people and communities to influence travel choices

Traffic and speed are blighting many of our communities. When asked, residents frequently cite speeding cars and nuisance parking as key issues that reduce the quality of their daily lives[19].

Evidence from the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns shows widespread dissatisfaction with levels of traffic growth, and strong public support for policies that favour walking, cycling and public transport over car travel[8].

Concerns about safety often prevent people from walking and cycling. When, in 2009, Sustrans surveyed 2,000 women, not feeling safe was the most common reason why women didn’t cycle, and the change that women felt would most enable them to cycle more was more cycle lanes separated from traffic.

Most day-to-day travel is local, so working with communities to improve the environment for those travelling on foot and bike and by public transport is key to enabling people to make smarter travel choices.

How Sustrans enabled people to improve their local travel environment in 2009:

More than 600 families worked with Sustrans to pioneer a new partnership approach to traffic-calming their streets.

Sustrans’ 3,000 volunteers donated over 180,000 hours of their time to maintain and sign sections of the National Cycle Network in their community. They also organised walks and rides to introduce people to their local routes, as well as working to assist Sustrans in schools and on delivering community projects. Their contribution is the equivalent of 100 people working full-time for a year.

We worked with artists within schools and communities to create many new artworks that enhance public space, and increase people’s pleasure of their local environment. On one stretch of the National Cycle Network 52% of the users told us they liked the route specifically because of the artworks along it.
Giving more power to people

Reducing traffic speed is crucial to enabling people to get out and about more. During 2009, Sustrans partnered with over 600 families on a pioneering project called DIY Streets. It helped the residents in 11 communities re-design their streets for their benefit, creating a safer and more attractive environment outside their front doors.

Since the introduction of the DIY Street in Torquay, the speed of traffic has been reduced

The results were extremely positive. As one resident puts it: “Thanks to Sustrans, our bins were swapped for larger communal ones with better recycling facilities, and the street is now a far more pleasant place to be. Our new speed table makes getting to the parkland opposite far safer, too. The changes, including new trees and planters, have had an enormously positive effect for the whole street.”

As a result of our partnership with residents on DIY Streets:

• 40% of residents are socialising with people that they hadn’t done before
• 36% of residents now see their street as safe for children’s play, compared to just 9% before DIY Streets
• 67% of residents now find their street greener and more attractive
• 73% of those living in a DIY Street with new artwork feel it improves the street
• 81% of residents feel that their street is now pedestrian friendly
• 13% of residents think that living on a DIY Street will allow them to walk more.

Source: Sustrans, 2010 Data based on survey of residents at Torquay’s DIY Street. (Actual traffic speeds reduced from 25mph to 18mph)
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Methodology

Methodology for reporting on usage of the National Cycle Network
Sustrans would like to thank all those who have contributed to the National Cycle Network monitoring programme. Those requiring more information on any part of this report, or wishing to become involved in the programme, should contact Sustrans’ Research and Monitoring Unit. researchandmonitoring@sustrans.org.uk

Measuring changes in the levels of cycling
Sustrans has been collating data from local authority networks of automated continuous cycle counters throughout the UK for several years. This data is the basis for expressions of the changing levels of cycle use. An independent review of analytical techniques employed has recently been completed.

Estimating total National Cycle Network use
A complex model is used to generate estimates of National Cycle Network usage. Figures for usage on different types of routes, combined with the figures describing changes in levels of cycling, form the basis for national level aggregation. An independent review of the model has recently been completed.

Methodology for deriving benefit cost ratios
Benefit to cost ratios have been calculated using Department for Transport guidance. Benefit to cost ratios for new walking and cycling routes near schools were informed by surveys of route users. The total benefit was estimated and divided by the cost of the scheme and was estimated on the basis of nine schemes. The tools currently used in economic appraisal of walking and cycling allow only for health benefits to adult populations and are likely therefore to represent a conservative estimate of the overall benefit of the schemes assessed particularly in relation to children’s health.

Methodology for school cycling figures (Sustrans’ Bike It)
Sustrans conducts hands-up surveys of pupils at schools where Sustrans’ Bike It project is being introduced for the first time.

In total, in the year 2008/09 Sustrans surveyed around 20,000 pupils at 114 Primary and nine Secondary schools in England (excluding schools surveyed in London and in Wales). Before the project began, Sustrans asked the pupils how often they cycled, walked or were driven to school and how they would prefer to travel to school. Sustrans then asked the same questions after Bike It had been delivered. Regular bike shed counts were also conducted throughout the academic year. For more information about Sustrans’ Bike It surveys please refer to the Bike It Technical Report: www.sustrans.org.uk/bikeit

Methodology for neighbourhood street surveys (Sustrans’ DIY Streets)
Sustrans’ Door to Door survey method was used to collect data on residents’ household demographics, travel behaviour (in particular parking issues and bicycle ownership and travel), their views and perceptions of the street and a means of planning and evaluating the changes delivered through the DIY Streets project. The Door to Door survey was conducted with one member of each household where possible. An individual survey before and after the project was considered the most appropriate way of collecting a wide range of information from residents, providing the entire street with the opportunity to contribute where possible. Surveys were conducted before the project when street visits and events were held. Post DIY Streets surveys were collected during street visits following the delivery of the works. For more details visit www.sustrans.org.uk/diystreets

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We hope that this report has demonstrated the huge potential that relatively simple and affordable changes to the way we travel can bring to people’s health, mobility and their environment.

Sustrans has over 400 full and part-time staff, and more than 3,000 volunteers working all over the UK. We have specialists in designing public space, active travel, school travel, community engagement and low carbon travel. We’re sure to already have someone working in your local area that can help you begin reaping the rewards of smarter travel.

Make your move and give your nearest Sustrans office a call today to find out how we can help.

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Welcome to Sustrans' report on usage of the National Cycle Network during 2008. I am delighted to report that the number of journeys on the Network increased for the ninth year in succession, to 386 million walking and cycling trips, an increase of 9% on the previous year. This is just under a third of the 1.2 billion passenger journeys made on Britain's railways in 2007/08.

As a result of this growth there are now more than one million journeys being made every day on the National Cycle Network, this is despite the fact that it remains the only nationally important travel network for which there is no obligation or consistent level of financial support for either its maintenance or its development.

Sustrans, with our many partners, is constantly adding new links and new sections to the Network, but the number of journeys being made is growing faster than its length. Even though the Network was extended in length during 2008, like-for-like usage since 2007 increased by 3%.

Trips on the Network are split roughly half and half between those made on foot and those made by bike, and those who see the Network as mainly a leisure network may be surprised to know that it is in weekday journeys that there has been the biggest increase in usage. This suggests that many more people are discovering the joys of commuting or getting to school on foot and by bike.

Most transport departments have key goals that underpin delivery of their strategies. The Department for Transport in England recently articulated these in its report, Delivering a Sustainable Transport System. The five goals are:

- to support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks
- to reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change
- to contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health
- to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society
- to improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

With the Sustainable Development Commission, amongst others, questioning the orthodoxy of economic growth as the overriding priority of government policy, we suggest that the first goal should focus on supporting economic prosperity. With that one minor, but crucial, amendment, we believe the National Cycle Network meets all of these key criteria more fully than any other travel network.

If you find that hard to believe, it is worth remembering as you read through the following pages that every one of the 386 million journeys made on the National Cycle Network during 2008 was a physically active, zero emission, de-
congesting, no petrol necessary journey. Furthermore, the Network itself is free at the point of access and passes within a mile of over 55% of the population.

As transport policymakers grapple with the challenges of the low carbon future that is now demanded by the UK’s first carbon budget; a world where cheap energy is a thing of the past; and a population whose sedentary lifestyles are costing health budgets billions, perhaps the Network and cycling and walking generally have earned the right to benefit from proper and consistent investment and promotion?

After all that’s what Germany, Denmark and Holland did back in the 1970’s when similar challenges first presented themselves. These nations deliberately favoured investment in sustainable and integrated travel over private car use. They found that it made economic sense, environmental sense, health sense, efficiency sense, and sense in terms of access for all. Sustrans shares the view that a transport system fit for purpose in the 21st century, enabling everyone who wants to, regardless of age or ability, to travel by foot and by bike for many more journeys, is just common-sense.

Malcolm Shepherd
Chief Executive
Supporting economic prosperity, delivering reliable and efficient travel
By enabling everyday physical activity as well as low carbon travel, the Network has a role to play in combating some of the most expensive challenges of our time.

Obesity, and related chronic conditions amongst children and adults, is predicted to cost the UK £49.9 billion each year by 2050. The cost of climate change is expected to run into the many trillions of pounds, with personal car use generating 13% of CO₂ emissions in the UK, with nearly six in ten of car journeys being under five miles.

Congestion on our roads is estimated to cost the UK economy more than £20 billion each year. And oil, on which motorised transport depends, is predicted to be more expensive in the years ahead.

Based on these facts alone, increasing levels of walking, cycling and use of public transport would contribute enormously to our economy in savings to taxpayers. They would also create a more robust transport system that is less exposed to the volatility of oil markets.

On the National Cycle Network during 2008:

- 96 million journeys were commuting trips
- 134 million journeys were made by people who could have used a car, but chose not to – if each of these trips had been made by car at the average car occupancy in the UK of 1.6, there would have been nearly 84 million more car journeys on the UK’s roads, equivalent to 11 months worth of traffic on the M25.
- using the World Health Organisation’s Health Economic Appraisal Tool for cycling, the total health benefit to cyclists that used the National Cycle Network in 2008 was worth £270 million (see the following page for more information)

And then there’s the value for money
Using the Department for Transport in England’s guidance on evaluating transport, three case studies based on Sustrans’ work demonstrate a benefit to cost ratio of 18, 22 and 38.

These benefit to cost ratios are reduced by the way that tax revenues are treated – schemes that reduce car use are marked down because of their loss of income to the Treasury. If this anomaly is stripped out the benefit to cost ratios are nearer 40:1.

Within the guidance any scheme that demonstrates a ratio above 4:1 falls within the ‘Very high’ value for money category. There is no category for schemes delivering ten times this amount.

*the SPC captures the costs associated with the damage caused by climate change, assigning a volume to each additional tonne of greenhouse gas emitted, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) for ease of comparison.

1 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2007 Shadow Price of Carbon
2 Highways Agency, All about the M25 Facts & Figures
In this context it is important to be able to calculate not only the direct personal health benefits of increased physical activity but also the resulting savings in associated health costs. Over the last two years Sustrans has played a major role in the development of the World Health Organisation’s Health and Economic Appraisal Tool for cycling, or HEAT for short.

The tool has been produced to assist anyone who wishes to conduct an economic appraisal of the health effects related to increased cycling. It is designed to complement existing tools for economic appraisals of transport interventions which have traditionally tended to focus on other issues such as emissions or congestion.

The tool will produce an estimate of the mean annual benefit (per cyclist; per trip; and total annual benefit) due to reduced mortality as a result of cycling.

In short, HEAT helps to answer the following question: If \( x \) people cycle \( y \) distance on most days, what is the value of the health benefits that occur as a result of the reduction in mortality due to their increased physical activity?

Sustrans has applied HEAT to National Cycle Network data for 2008. For the first time, this has enabled Sustrans to estimate a monetary value for health benefits associated with usage of the Network:

- based on an average trip length of 7.4 km (4.6 miles), the total health benefit to cyclists that used the National Cycle Network in 2008 was worth £270 million
- at present HEAT cannot be used to calculate economic health benefits to pedestrians, however an extremely conservative assumption that walking might be worth one third of the benefit of cycling, gives us an annual benefit of £360 million for all those using the Network for walking trips
- these yearly National Cycle Network health benefit figures actually outweigh all the costs of developing the Network over the last 14 years many times over
- extrapolating this data, we estimate that over the next ten years, cycling on the Network (as it exists today) could save the NHS £3.4 billion.

WHO has plans to produce a similar tool to calculate the health benefits for pedestrians and Sustrans will be a key contributor to its development.

Improve the UK’s health and reduce the burden on our economy
the economic health benefits of cycling
Reliable, efficient travel
commuting by bike in an urban area

Sustrans conducted surveys at two points along a refurbished traffic-free path adjacent to the River Thames in Greenwich. Collecting data at the heart of such a busy city centre has highlighted the efficiency and simplicity of commuting trips made by bike where they are a viable option. The results from the Cutty Sark survey point mirror the growing popularity of cycle commuting throughout London. They are indicative of what is possible in urban areas, where 80% of the UK’s population now lives, if the right networks of routes are in place to inspire people of all abilities and ages to cycle.

At the Cutty Sark survey point in 2008:

- nearly 63,000 trips were made by bike
- 44% of trips made by bike were to work. This compares to an average of 7% throughout the UK
- 99% of cyclists used no other mode of transport for their trip despite the fact that 57% of them could have used a car
- one in four cyclists were women
- 22% of cyclists described themselves as new to or returning to cycling and 62% said that they intended to cycle more often in the future
- 16% of cyclists said that they used the path more often since it had been upgraded with an increased width and improved surface
- 94% of cyclists feel very or fairly safe in terms of other traffic, and 86% felt safe in terms of their personal security.

**Cutty Sark**
percentage of cyclists by trip type

- Commuting: 44%
- Shopping: 21%
- Leisure: 21%
- Other: 14%

Source: Sustrans, 2008
Reducing transport’s emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and therefore tackling climate change
Children make good use of the National Cycle Network, and more research is needed to establish the benefit of walking and cycling in childhood in creating habit forming sustainable travel behaviour in adulthood, and the impact on their “lifetime” carbon footprint.

The Netherlands has one of the lowest carbon footprints from domestic transport in Europe. One in four of all journeys in the Netherlands are made by bike. And this habit starts early - over a third of journeys made by those under the age of 15 are by bike. Compare this to 2% in the UK. It could be argued that high levels of cycling in childhood is indicative of high levels of cycling generally.

On the National Cycle Network during 2008:

- 35% of users could have used a car but chose not to
- 76% of journeys were made solely on foot or by bike – 292 million journeys
- 77% of users have access to a car in their household
- 23% of trips were for commuting – this is more than double the number of trips for this purpose in 2007
- 64 million journeys made on the Network were made by children to get to school or for play
- 17 million trips were made to school, reducing the congestion caused by the school run
- 9% of walking and cycling trips were as part of a longer journey combining with bus and rail services
- the National Cycle Network offers a real alternative for door-to-door trips made by car – the average length of journey for commuters on bikes on traffic-free sections of the Network is about five miles – the same distance as nearly two-thirds of car journeys
- the potential carbon saving of all journeys made was 493,000 tonnes. This is the equivalent of taking 218,000 cars off the road.
Better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy
Throughout the UK there are also significant inequalities in terms of health and levels of physical activity within the population. This is reflected in a significant difference between areas with the highest and lowest life expectancies.

Busy roads and anti-social parking are repeatedly cited as major concerns in the British Crime Survey, with fewer people actively present in their streets having a correlation to increased fear of crime.

In addition, numerous studies have shown that lower traffic levels are associated with significantly higher levels of social interaction, and that in urban areas conducive to walking, cycling and outdoor play people are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically, trust others and be socially engaged.

In short, prioritising walking and cycling over private car use can make a vital contribution to social cohesion, neighbourhood revitalisation and community well-being.

Creating the right environment to enable many more people to walk and cycle was one of the top five policy responses to obesity in the Foresight report, and was echoed in guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence as a way to enable much greater levels of physical activity.

Enabling a shift to walking and cycling also benefits those areas which suffer from poor air quality and high levels of traffic noise, both of which can have a detrimental impact on people’s health.

On the National Cycle Network during 2008:

- 71% of users say that the National Cycle Network is enabling them to increase the amount of everyday physical activity they take. This rises to 76% amongst women.
- the Network is encouraging people to take up or start cycling again – 6% of cyclists say they are new to or returning to cycling
- 42% of users are walking and cycling more than they were a year ago and 40% are planning to walk and cycle more in the future
- 42% of those using urban traffic-free sections of the Network are over the age of 45
- 39% of users of the Network do so because of the safe environment it offers.

Obesity is now a serious public health concern. The 2007 Foresight Tackling Obesities report showed that obesity levels in the UK are reaching epidemic proportions. Without urgent action to change behaviour, nearly 60% of the UK population could be obese by 2050, at an annual cost of £49.9 billion at today’s prices.
The National Cycle Network during 2008

386 million walking and cycling trips, an increase of 9% on 2007

71% of users say that the Network is enabling them to increase the amount of everyday physical activity they take. This rises to 76% amongst women.

96 million journeys were commuting trips
12% of users are aged 16-24, and in this age category a higher percentage of women use the Network than men.

The National Cycle Network is free at the point of access and passes within a mile of over 55% of the population.

134 million journeys were made by people who could have used a car but chose not to. Up from 74 million in 2007.

The potential carbon saving of all 386 million journeys is 493,000 tonnes.

42% of users are walking and cycling more than they were a year ago and 40% are planning to walk and cycle more in the future.
Enabling people to make their shorter, everyday journeys more sustainably is going to be fundamental in delivering a low carbon transport system. The linking of the National Cycle Network into the heart of communities has meant that journeys to work, to the shops, to school and to visit nearby friends and family are now easier on foot or by bike. People now have an option to choose an active, low carbon journey as an alternative to the car.

Sustrans measured usage of a route at Eden Bridge in Carlisle. The route is a key route for a variety of local journeys, linking the north side of Carlisle to the centre of the city.

At Eden Bridge in 2008:

- it is estimated that more than 600,000 walking or cycling trips were made. That’s more than 50,000 every month
- 98% of users said that getting to the main route across the bridge was fairly easy both on foot and by bike. Accessing the main sections of the National Cycle Network is crucial in enabling people to make sustainable journeys from door-to-door
- amongst cyclists, commuting, shopping and personal business make up 78% of all trips
- 91% of those surveyed said that they had used no other mode of transport to make their trip. This is despite the fact that 61% could have used a car if they wanted to
- Carlisle’s seasonal weather does not seem to deter usage. The number of pedestrians using the route falls marginally from 60% to 56% between spring/summer and autumn/winter
- there is an appetite to use the route even more. Something as simple as improving lighting along the route (so that people feel comfortable using it in the evening and during the winter months) would be enough to persuade 17% of current users to use the route more often.

Eden Bridge, Carlisle
percentage of users by trip type

- Commuting: 39%
- Education: 31%
- Shopping: 6%
- Personal business: 6%
- Leisure: 1%
- Other: 17%

Source: Sustrans, 2008
Safety is cited as the number one concern amongst parents when they are asked to consider allowing their children to get to school on their own. In Scotland, Sustrans’ Tackling the School Run programme has been delivering measures to increase active travel on the school journey. Building better walking and cycling paths near schools that link into the National Cycle Network is just one method of helping to encourage a greater take up of an active school run.

Sustrans measured route usage before and after improvements to one such path near a primary school at Hailes Quarry Park in Edinburgh.

The path was upgraded from a muddy stretch across a park to a properly surfaced and attractive walking and cycling route.

At Hailes Quarry Park in 2008:

- the number of trips made by children using the path nearly doubled as a result of improvements
- in 2007 virtually no trips were made for education. Following improvements, 12% of trips were for education
- it’s not just children that benefited. There was a 22% increase in usage amongst people over 60 years of age and more women now use the path
- overall, there was a 24% increase in the number of trips made per year along this stretch of path
- the percentage of people that said that they intended to walk or cycle more in the future more than doubled, with almost half of all users saying that they planned to travel actively more often following the route improvements.

Who says P.E. class can’t start at the front door? A better, more attractive path makes a more popular journey
Equality of opportunity for all, achieving a fairer society
Walking and cycling are the most accessible forms of travel. They are low cost, and available to all regardless of age and income.

Whilst the National Travel Survey reveals that the gender gap has closed considerably over the past 30 years in relation to personal car use, it also reveals that women make only 1% of trips by bike, compared to 2% by men. Sustrans’ own survey of 1,000 women shows that safety is the major concern for women, and much greater prevalence of dedicated cycling routes would, in the opinion of the majority of women, be the best way of enabling more women to cycle.

It is also worth remembering that 25% of households in Britain do not have a car available to them, yet our transport system and access to local destinations is based on the notion that everyone can jump in a car.

The National Cycle Network now passes within a mile of 55% of the UK population, with a third of it being free from traffic. It is also free at the point of access.

On the National Cycle Network during 2008:

- urban traffic-free sections of the Network are three times more popular for cycling than road-adjacent sections
- 8% of users identify themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)
- 135 million journeys on the Network were made by women – two thirds of these were on foot – and women were more likely to have chosen to leave their car behind than men
- women are using it more compared to a year ago than men, and they are also planning to use it more than men in the future
- a fifth of women cycling describe themselves as new to or returning to cycling, and overall women account for over a third of all journeys made on the Network
- the number of women starting to cycle again is four times as high as men, and the proportion of women who describe themselves as new to cycling is ten times higher than men
- 13% of cycling trips on urban traffic-free sections are by new, returning, or occasional cyclists. On urban, on-road sections all cycling trips are by experienced cyclists
- 42% of users of traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network say they are more likely to be cycling and walking more in the future compared with 29% on sections that are on road
- for 28% of users of the Network a car was not an available option
- 12% of users are aged 16-24, and in this age category a higher percentage of women use the Network than men
- 2% of trips on the Network are made by people with a disability – this rises to 5% in those over 60
- rural traffic-free sections are popular with people over 60 who make 24% of their trips on these routes.
Improved quality of life for all, promoting a healthy natural environment
The UK ranks far behind our northern European neighbours in liveability indices. It is often the quality of public transport, and provision for pedestrians and cyclists that sets liveable cities around the world apart from those in the UK. That is why Copenhagen topped the league in 2008, when it was one of nine northern European cities featured in the top 20 compared to none from the UK.

It is this notion of liveability that informs the vision for the National Cycle Network, particularly traffic-free sections. These focus on creating the right environment for those who feel unable to cycle and walk on or beside our busy roads. Women, children, older people, people with pushchairs, people with disabilities – Sustrans wants to create space that inspires and motivates everyone to feel they could choose to travel under their own steam, not just those who are already confident in their ability to do this.

Integral to creating this great public space is Sustrans’ work on Art and the Travelling Landscape which, over the last 30 years, has been responsible for commissioning public art to both enhance and inform local spaces.

Many of the most successful sections of the Network are greenways, giving people direct access to green space. These green transport corridors are also havens for wildlife, providing vital links to habitats for a range of species.*

*For more information please see Sustrans’ Biodiversity Action Plan on our website.)

At the heart of quality of life is liveability, and central to this is creating public space that is equally available to all - an environment that creates access for the majority rather than mobility for the few.

On the National Cycle Network during 2008:

- 52% of people used the Network because of the pleasant environment it offers
- traffic-free sections of the Network account for about a third of its length, but 85% of its usage
- 38% of users of traffic-free sections of the Network could have used a car but chose not to, compared to 12% of those using other parts of the Network
- in every age group except those aged 45-59 people were more likely to be using traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network
- people without access to a car are more likely to be using traffic-free sections of National Cycle Network
- over 17 million trips were made by those who were new to, returning to, or occasional cyclists, on traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network, compared to three million made on other sections
- on rural traffic-free sections over 6% of trips are made by those registered as disabled
- nearly a quarter of all trips made on rural traffic-free sections are made by people over the age of 60, in contrast to urban traffic-free sections where a third of all journeys are made by those aged 16-34.
Sustrans undertook surveys along National Cycle Network Route 1, alongside the river Witham, at Bardney in Lincolnshire. The route features an extensive art trail reflecting the nature, history and culture of the local environment.

At the river Witham in 2008:

- 52% of those surveyed said that they liked the route because of the artwork and more than 15% of people said that they had made their trip specifically to see the artwork

- overall, 87% of users surveyed said that they liked the artwork along the route

- nine out of ten people surveyed were aware of artworks on the route

- the vast majority of trips along this route were for leisure and more than 40% of the pedestrians using the route were 60 years or over

- ‘pleasant surroundings’ was cited as the number one reason why people chose to use the route

- 26% of people using this route were 60 years of age or older, this compares to 8% across all surveyed routes.
Bike Belles
catalyst for a gender revolution

Sustrans surveyed a thousand women to find out how often they cycled, what prevented them from cycling more often and what they thought would encourage women to cycle more. Here’s what we found:

The challenge
- whilst 43% of the women surveyed had access to a bike, just 4% said that they cycled more than once a week, and 79% said that they didn’t cycle at all
- safety was cited as the number one reason preventing those surveyed from cycling, particularly amongst women over the age of 45

The opportunity
The survey also revealed some really strong evidence that suggests that most women would be prepared to cycle more often if they had a safer environment in which to cycle. Traffic-free cycle lanes are identified as being particularly important.
- the majority of women thought that cycle lanes that were separated from traffic altogether would encourage women to cycle more
- a further third said that cycle lanes that were kept clear of all vehicles except buses would be enough to encourage a greater uptake
- an enforced 20 mph speed limit in residential areas was considered another catalyst by more than one in five of those surveyed

During 2009, Sustrans has focussed much of its work on analysing the reasons why so few women in the UK currently cycle on a daily basis. In Holland, by contrast, over half of all cycle trips are by women. Sustrans launched its Bike Belles website – a website dedicated to providing practical measures for women to get in the cycling habit to offer both information and advice, but also to understand better what is preventing women from cycling. We will work with others to widely disseminate what we learn to try and create an environment that will encourage many millions of women to cycle.
Methodology

Sustrans would like to thank all those who have contributed to the National Cycle Network monitoring programme. Those requiring more information on any part of this report, or wishing to become involved in the programme, should contact Sustrans’ Research and Monitoring Unit.

Measuring changes in the levels of cycling
Sustrans has been collating data from local authority networks of automated continuous cycle counters throughout the UK for several years. This data is the basis for expressions of the changing levels of cycle use. A sample of over 430 counters formed the basis for this year’s change measurement. An independent review of analytical techniques employed has recently been completed.

Estimating total National Cycle Network use
A complex model is used to generate estimates of National Cycle Network usage. Figures for usage on different types of routes, combined with the figures describing changes in levels of cycling, form the basis for national level aggregation. The process used this year is consistent with that used in 2005, 06 and 07. Pedestrian use of road adjacent routes is not assigned as Network use. An independent review of the model has recently been completed.

Profiling the use of the Network
Profiles of National Cycle Network usage are derived from route user surveys. A further 22 of these were conducted in 2008. Sustrans holds a database of over 60,000 face-to-face interviews with route users collected over the past eight years. Survey response data is weighted on the basis of concurrent local user counts and national Network usage estimates, in-line with the recommendations of an independent review of the survey process.

Case studies
The case studies presented are derived from count and survey data collected by Sustrans and partners.

Future reporting
We are always seeking to improve our methodology for interpreting the data we collect. Over the next few years we particularly wish to:

1. Improve the sophistication of cycle usage estimation based on better modelling of count data.
2. Generate better ‘levels of change’ data for cycling activity.
3. Enhance our understanding of pedestrian activity on road-adjacent routes.

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About Sustrans
Sustrans is the UK’s leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all.

The National Cycle Network is one of these solutions. Working in partnership with hundreds of local authorities, and many other organisations and funders, over 12,000 miles of routes and links were completed by December 2008.

This Route User Monitoring Report describes usage of the National Cycle Network during 2008. We can only publish a selection of the mass of data we collect. For fuller and more detailed information, visit the Research and Monitoring section of our website at www.sustrans.org.uk to see other data as it becomes available.

For more copies of this report please visit www.sustrans.org.uk to download a PDF or e-mail researchandmonitoring@sustrans.org.uk for printed copies.

Sustrans is also the charity behind a whole range of community, health and environmental projects that are changing our world one mile at a time.

If you think what we do sounds sensible, we urgently need people like you to help us do more. By giving from £5 a month you’ll start to make a difference. Without this financial support, Sustrans and projects such as the National Cycle Network would probably not exist.

To find out more about Sustrans or to become a Sustrans Supporter please visit www.sustrans.org.uk or call 0845 113 00 65.

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Sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT
The National Cycle Network
Route User Monitoring Report
To end of 2007
Welcome

Welcome to Sustrans’ report on usage of the National Cycle Network during 2007. I am delighted to report that the number of journeys has increased to over 354 million walking and cycling trips, an increase of 4.7% on the number of trips made during 2006.

This is the eighth year in succession that usage has increased, and it is growing much faster than the Network is extending in length. Since 2000 usage has nearly quadrupled from just under 90 million to 354 million trips a year. During the same period the Network itself has grown in length from under 5,000 miles to just over 12,000 miles.

As you read through the report it is worth remembering that Sustrans’ vision for the National Cycle Network was that it would act as a catalyst for changing people’s travel behaviour. The very simple idea is that if you create the right environment for people to walk and cycle, then people will choose to travel by foot and bike. Over the following pages you will see how the National Cycle Network is achieving this in communities throughout the UK.

Climate change, health, quality of life, equality of access, economic growth – all of these, to a lesser and greater extent, are the key priorities for transport policy within the UK. The National Cycle Network is playing a role in addressing all of these – all 354 million journeys made on the Network, for example, are physically active, non-congesting, zero emission journeys with no petrol necessary.

This year Sustrans, and our many partners, begin work on greatly extending local walking and cycling routes in 79 communities throughout the UK.

Connect2 will transform travel within these communities, enabling many more people to walk and cycle to the shops, school, work, or to reach friends and family as well as green spaces. We know that nearly 60% of car journeys are under five miles, so these networks will enable many more people to choose to travel differently.

This would not be possible if Sustrans had not worked long and hard to win the Big Lottery Fund’s: the People’s £50 Million contest. Thanks to all those who voted for Sustrans, this £50 million has leveraged matched funding from local authorities. The outcome is that the National Cycle Network will grow locally only because Sustrans beat three other very worthy contenders in a public TV vote.

The reality is that the National Cycle Network is a UK-wide transport infrastructure. During 2007 it carried nearly a third of the journeys made on our resurgent, well-funded rail network. Other than in Scotland, Sustrans receives no direct funding, from transport departments for the Network. As obesity spirals out of control, as greenhouse gas emissions from transport continue to rise, and as petrol prices rocket, is this fact sending the right message?

We urgently need to move towards a sustainable transport system. We will only be able to provide one when solutions that provide the right environment for walking and cycling - like the National Cycle Network - become integral to transport policy and are funded accordingly.

Malcolm Shepherd
Chief Executive
Why we need to change the way we move

Climate change, obesity and security of energy supply are some of the biggest policy concerns in the UK today. Underpinning these, and indeed all government strategy, is on-going economic growth. These are all closely related. The contribution that the National Cycle Network makes to the UK’s economy is in its ability to enable people to change the way they move every day, and bring about low emission active travel.

The cost to our economy of climate change will be enormous. Our existing transport system is responsible for a quarter of UK emissions, with personal car use accounting for over 40% of transport emissions. A quarter of car journeys are under a mile, and two thirds under five miles – it is obvious that enabling people to walk and cycle much more could replace a large number of car journeys and the emissions they generate.

If obesity trends continue, our sedentary lifestyles and inactive travel behaviour could be costing our economy £50 billion a year by 2050. Enabling people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives is a key part of government health policy. Walking and cycling are obvious ways to achieve this, and creating the right environment to enable this will save money and lives.

In addition, oil (and therefore petrol) is a finite, and increasingly expensive resource, costing our economy millions every time the price of a barrel of oil rises a couple of dollars. Our transport system is extraordinarily vulnerable to oil shocks. The National Cycle Network enables people to reduce their consumption of oil – No Combustion is Necessary if you create the right environment for people to walk and cycle.
The National Cycle Network is enabling people to make everyday journeys to work, to the shops, to school, to visit family and friends, to green spaces and for leisure.
Despite the summer of 2007 being extremely wet, usage of the Network grew for the eighth year in a row. The Network carried over 354 million trips during the year, a 4.7% increase on the previous year. 50% of trips were made by bike, 50% on foot.

- usage increased on the Network in countries across the UK, with 35 million journeys in Wales, 39 million in Scotland, 10 million in Northern Ireland and 270 million in England
- those sections of Network that are free from motorised traffic continue to be the busiest. During 2007 these sections carried 82% of all journeys on the Network, even though they account for only a third of the Network overall
- however, the sections of Network that saw the most growth in usage during 2007 were those that are road-adjacent and on-road which saw usage increase by 6.5%
- 21% percent of users could have used a car but chose not to – 74 million journeys where people chose to leave their car behind
- over three quarters of users say that the National Cycle Network is enabling them to increase the amount of everyday physical activity they take, and 35% are planning to walk and cycle more in future
- the Network is encouraging people to take up or start cycling again – 9% of cyclists say they are new to or returning to cycling. This represents 15 million journeys
- the Network is enabling children to travel actively, and often independently, both to school and for play – young people under the age of 16 accounted for 15% of all journeys made during 2007.

9% of cyclists on the National Cycle Network described themselves as new to or returning to cycling.
Over 354 million active, zero emission, energy efficient and congestion combating trips were made on the Network in 2007.
Reducing CO₂ emissions

The National Cycle Network is offering people the choice of zero emission travel by offering good access and connections, predictable end-to-end journey times and reliability. It is primarily a Network for short journeys, as, increasingly, is our road network.

- on the National Cycle Network 74% of journeys were solely made on foot or by bike
- 86% of users of the National Cycle Network have access to a car, but very few are using them for any part of their journey
- 12% of journeys on the National Cycle Network are commuting trips. The average trip length for commuters on bikes on the National Cycle Network is just under five miles, the same distance as nearly two-thirds of car journeys
- over nine million trips are being made to school on the National Cycle Network, reducing the impact of the school run on rush-hour traffic and giving children access to everyday physical activity
- the potential carbon dioxide saving of all journeys made on the Network during 2006 was over 450,000 tonnes of CO₂. Based on an average annual mileage of 8,190 miles, this is the equivalent of taking just under 200,000 cars off the road. This figure represents 8% of the total number of new cars sold in 2007
- if all the journeys made on the Network had been made by a car instead, the petrol consumed is estimated at 232 million litres, a cost of £269 million based on unleaded fuel prices in mid 2008.

The potential carbon dioxide saving of all journeys made on the National Cycle Network in 2006 was over 450,000 tonnes. This is the equivalent of taking just under 200,000 cars off the road.
Hauler’s Way in Belfast is a section of Network connecting Lisburn to Jordanstown. The riverside route on the city side of the River Lagan has been improved at many points on its way through Belfast, and is a high quality, easily accessible and well connected cycling and walking route.

Sustrans has data from route user surveys on this section of Network dating back to 1995. The route was completed during 2000, and new links and access points added during 2002 and 2004. We surveyed the route again in 2004 and 2007.

The survey site is on the riverside path between the Albert and Ormeau Bridges on the west bank of the Lagan. At the Red Bridge there is a link from the path into the Gasworks Business Park via a subway under a railway line.

2007 is the eighth consecutive year that usage has increased on the National Cycle Network. Below we look at a route in Belfast which has been improved and extended over the last ten years. We have data from five surveys spanning 13 years showing just how this section of the Network is enabling people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.

Case study
Increasing usage year-on-year
The survey conducted during 2007 shows:

• annual usage at the survey location is estimated as 511,000 trips, an increase of 42% since 2004
• cycling in particular has increased – from 88,000 trips in 2004 to 172,000 trips in 2007, a 95% increase
• pedestrians made nearly two-thirds of trips – in 2007 they made 318,000 journeys, a 20% increase on 2004
• children make 50,000 of the journeys – just under 10% of the total
• 32% of users could have used a car but chose not to, and for 17% of users a car was not an available option
• a third of people use the route frequently – 50% of journeys are for commuting, with 5% for shopping
• cycling is more popular for commuting – 75% of cycling trips are taking people to work, and cyclists are more likely to have chosen to leave their car behind – 59% of cyclists
• for 56% of pedestrians, going for a walk is the main reason for their journey
• 8% of cyclists are new to or returning to cycling
• between 2004 and 2007 the percentage of commuting trips increased from 39% to 50%.
Foresight’s Tackling Obesities report, published in October 2007, suggests that on current trends nearly 60% of the UK population could be obese by 2050, with the wider cost to society and business predicted to reach nearly £50 billion a year.
Increasing everyday physical activity

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidance that places walking and cycling at the heart of its recommendations for preventing and managing over 20 conditions, including obesity.

The National Cycle Network won the World Health Organisation’s Combating Obesity Award in 2006 precisely because it creates an environment that enables people, including children, to be physically active everyday.

- 78% of all users say that the presence of the National Cycle Network in their community has helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they regularly take. This rises to 84% amongst women.

- 42% of users of the Network are walking and cycling more than they were a year ago, and a third are planning to walk and cycle more in the future.

- 51% of those using urban traffic-free sections of the Network are over the age of 45, whereas the National Travel Survey shows walking and cycling declining in people over the age of 40.

- 14% of users of the Network are over the age of 60.

- rural traffic free sections are particularly popular with people over 60 who make a quarter of their trips on these routes. Convenience of the routes is the most important reason within this age group as to why they use the Network.

- the Network is enabling people to return to or begin cycling, particularly women, with 13% of women who cycle describing themselves as novice cyclists.

- of the 354 million trips made on the Network during 2007, 54 million were made by children to travel to school and for fun, giving them access to both independent play and everyday physical activity.

- men and women of all ages rate pleasant surroundings, safety and convenience as the main reasons why they use the National Cycle Network, all of which appear to be important in enabling active travel.

- as a result over 41% of users of traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network say they are more likely to be cycling and walking more in the future compared to less than 1% on road-adjacent sections.

78% of all users say that the presence of the National Cycle Network in their community has helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they regularly take.
Currently 30% of boys and 40% of girls are not achieving the recommended one hour a day of exercise that is considered necessary for maintaining health and well-being. Report after report has recommended that walking and cycling to school is one of the most cost effective and practical ways of incorporating everyday physical activity into children’s lives.

In Scotland, Sustrans, funded by the Scottish Government, has been delivering a programme aimed at **Tackling the School Run**. Working in partnership with School Travel Co-ordinators across Scotland, different measures have been employed to increase active travel on the school journey. These have ranged from the building of walking and cycling paths to schools, lending bikes to children, installing cycle storage in schools and improving attitudes towards walking and cycling. Below we assess the impact of one of the Links to Schools built as part of the programme.

East Linton Primary in East Lothian is a small school in a small town about 20 miles east of Edinburgh near Dunbar. The aim of the **Tackling the School Run** scheme was to:

- provide a safer route to and from school for pedestrians and cyclists
- reduce the number of vehicles trying to access the area close to the school
- provide a better route for the wider community to use whenever they like.

**Case study**

**Letting the kids take the kids to school**

It has been calculated that at 8.50am on a school day as many as one in five cars on the road are making the school run. The Department for Transport in England has stated that reducing this level of congestion, pollution and crowding of our school gates by cars is a key cross-departmental policy requirement.
The project involved improvements to what was an informal route along the side of a grassy field. The path is now well surfaced, well lit and dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists. Below we compare the results of surveys conducted before and after the work was complete.

- the number of children making use of the route increased by more than a third, from 113,000 trips a year to 152,000
- in terms of trips to school the average number of children counted during school travel periods increased from 93 to 168.

**Wider community benefits**

- the number of trips by those over the age of 60 has doubled, and in total the number of journeys being made has increased from 146,000 to 232,000
- women and girls have particularly benefited. They made 70% more journeys compared to 47% for men and boys
- pedestrians account for 88% of all journeys, but cycling levels have increased by 54% to 20,000 trips a year
- the journeys people are making on the route have changed – leisure trips have gone down as a percentage, with school and shopping trips seeing particular growth.

This is a relatively new link, but what happens to usage on a link to school over a couple of years? Does usage continue to increase or does it simply plateau?

In England, Sustrans has been working on Links to Schools as part of a Cycling England funded initiative for four years.

One such link was built from the National Cycle Network to Lytham Church of England Primary School, an average sized school with just over 300 pupils. The link connects to traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network for those travelling from further afield.

The work was completed in spring 2005, and Sustrans surveyed usage of the route in July 2005 and again in September 2007.

- within school periods the number of children walking and cycling to school on an average school day increased from 78 to 109, a 40% increase
- the number of children cycling increased from 31 to 46 on an average day
- general use by children increases nearly threefold from 35,000 trips to 104,000 a year.

**Wider community benefits**

- the number of trips being made by those over the age of 60 more than doubled
- usage by women nearly trebled from 38,000 to 111,000 trips
- the percentage of people who said they could have used a car but chose not to increased from 16% to 52%. This equates to nearly 39,000 trips, or potentially 107 fewer cars each day
- the percentage of those who say that the route had helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they regularly take also increased from 38% to 59%
- the usage of the route is more varied, with trips being made to school, to work, to college, to the shops and other local services, as well as for leisure
- over a quarter of cyclists described themselves as returning to cycling, or occasional cyclists, suggesting that this link and the traffic-free routes of the National Cycle Network to which it connects is enabling people to gain cycling confidence.
We estimate that the National Cycle Network now passes within a mile of 55% of people living in the UK...
Improving access for all

...and with new links to schools and local networks with Connect2 schemes being completed over the coming years, many more people will be able to access the Network.

Anyone can use the National Cycle Network to reach work, shops, family and friends, as well as countryside and green spaces.

- 14% of all journeys on the Network in 2007 were made by people without access to a car. A fifth of users over the age of 60 have no access to a car, and in urban areas 15% of pedestrians on traffic-free sections of the Network do not have access to a car.

- 67% of cyclists and pedestrians identifying themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) had no access to a car in their household. This increased to 75% of cyclists identifying as BME.

- 55% of BME cyclists are using the Network to get to work.

- 16% of users are aged 16-24. In this age group three times as many trips are being made by females than males – the only age group in which journeys by women are more than by men.

- whilst men use the Network more than women, the share of journeys being made by women has increased year on year since 2000, and during 2007 women made 42% of all journeys on the Network.

- 3% of trips on the Network are made by people with a disability – this rises to 5% in those over 60.

42% of all journeys on the National Cycle Network in 2007 were made by women.
The National Cycle Network links many towns and cities to local green spaces, and many of the Network’s iconic routes are destinations in their own right.

The Celtic Trail in Wales runs along the South Coast, and links people along its length to local places, including green spaces. Much of the Celtic Trail is dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists, providing a safe and green space for trips on foot and bike.

Case study
Access to green spaces

The National Travel Survey reveals that during 2006 the number of trips made by car for leisure, including days out to green spaces, accounted for 23% of car driver trips. Enabling travel to green spaces by foot and bike is a way of reversing the trend for people to use their cars for days out, whilst increasing access for those without a car.
Usage of the Celtic Trail varies along its length, so in Swansea usage is very high for commuting, shopping and leisure. At Nantgarw, where the Celtic Trail meets the Taff Trail on a key section of traffic-free route through woodland, there is good access for those who live in Cardiff to the south, Caerphilly to the east and Pontypridd to the north, providing a gateway to the countryside for these communities. Sustrans conducted a survey in 2006 and again in 2007 to see how usage was changing. The Nantgarw data shows:

- 14% of journeys are for commuting (this has increased significantly between 2006 and 2007), but the majority (85%) of journeys are for leisure
- 83% of respondents are using no other mode of transport to make their journeys despite the fact that 92% of users have access to a car within their household
- the total number of users annually is estimated at 42,000, with cyclists accounting for 82% of all journeys
- children account for 16% of all users, and those over 60 for 8%. Between 2006 and 2007 the number of trips by children has increased by 43% and by people over 60 by 77%
- the number of women and girls using the route has also increased by 13%
- 91% of cyclists say that the presence of the route has enabled them to increase the amount of physical activity that they take on a regular basis. 14% of cyclists describe themselves as new to or returning to cycling
- over half of cyclists say that they intend to cycle more in the future.

In a very different location the National Cycle Network leaves the River Thames in London and passes north through Hackney, one of the most deprived Boroughs in London where car ownership is low by UK standards at 44% of households. The route enables access to Hackney Marshes, a vast green space in the North East of London, and the River Lee that runs north to Ware in Hertfordshire. Sustrans conducted a survey at Friends Bridge, close to Hackney Marshes in 2003 and then again in 2007.

- the annual number of users is estimated at 134,000, compared to 87,000 in 2003
- whilst 17% of all journeys are for commuting (26% for cyclists), the majority of journeys are for leisure
- 51% of users do not have access to a car
- 64% of users are cycling – usage by cyclists has increased significantly since 2003, from 33,000 to 86,000. 33% of cyclists are new to or returning to cycling
- 90% of users say that the route is enabling them to increase the amount of physical activity they take on a regular basis
- 7% of users are children and 3% are over the age of 60.
Given concerns about climate change and the rising cost of long-distance travel, the notion of local sustainable tourism is now higher up on people’s agendas. Generally speaking it is a big change in people’s travel behaviour to swap a holiday to Florida for two weeks cycling on the National Cycle Network. However, for those who enjoy physically active holidays and are keen to try something new, the National Cycle Network is one of the most sustainable holiday destinations on offer.

Case study
The economic benefits of cycle tourism

The National Cycle Network is not only offering people the choice of low emission and active travel for everyday journeys – many of its routes are also destinations in their own right. Although a small part of its usage, there are a significant number of people, particularly cyclists, using the Network for day trips and holidays. During 2007, of all the cycling trips on the Network, 16% were day trips and 1% were cycling trips of more than three days.
Sustrans undertook a study on behalf of the North East Regional Development Agency, One North East (ONE) which funded the development of a network of cycle routes in the North East of England. Four routes were evaluated for their economic benefit and their potential in terms of sustainable tourism development. The routes were chosen because they were designed to be used for both short, everyday journeys, as well as cycle tourism:

- **C2C** (Sea to Sea) Cycle Route (Newcastle to Whitehaven)
- **Coast and Castles South** Cycle Route (Newcastle to Edinburgh)
- **Hadrian's Cycleway** (following Hadrian's Wall)
- **Pennine Cycleway** (northern section)

The report was underpinned by a literature review, an overview of tourism policies, and an analysis of primary data collected on the National Cycle Network by Sustrans in the period 2001-2006.

The study utilised a model that explores the wider relationship between the economic and social values associated with cycle tourism route development.

**The three core elements are:**

1. **Spending:** directly related to the development of cycle routes in the North East.
2. **Spillovers:** indirect benefits within the region.
3. **Social value:** the value associated with the routes and the experience which is beyond monetary value.

**It was estimated that:**

- route users within the region contributed £9.6 million in direct expenditure to the North East economy in 2006
- this represented a value of £13.4 million to the wider North East economy
- this supported 216 jobs in the immediate vicinity of the routes
- out-of-region users generated £5.9 million, supporting an additional 95 full-time equivalent jobs
- the value of the four routes in their entirety (including the sections of the C2C and Hadrian’s Cycleway in Cumbria) rises to £22.3 million
- cycling activity is important to local supply chains, with major implications for the circulation of income in the local tourism economy.

In addition, Sustrans asked how much people would be willing to pay to use the routes. On average the price they were prepared to pay for each trip was £5.59, a potential amenity value for all the routes of an additional £1.7 million.
This report is derived from a range of data sources. These include continuous cycle counters, route user surveys, manual user counts, other user surveys, and central government data sources.
Methodology

Sustrans would like to thank all the partners who have contributed to the National Cycle Network monitoring programme. Those requiring more information on any part of this report, or wishing to become involved in the programme, should contact Sustrans’ Research and Monitoring Unit.

Measuring changes in the levels of cycling
Sustrans has been collating data from local authority networks of automated continuous cycle counters throughout the UK for several years. This data is the basis for expressions of the changing levels of cycle use. A sample of over 300 counters formed the basis for this year’s change measurement. An independent review of analytical techniques employed is currently underway.

Estimating total National Cycle Network use
A complex model is used to generate estimates of National Cycle Network usage. Figures for usage on different types of routes, combined with the figures describing changes in levels of cycling, form the basis for national level aggregation. The process used this year is consistent with that used in 2005 and 2006. Pedestrian use of road adjacent routes is not assigned as Network use. An independent review of the model is currently underway.

Profiling the use of the Network
Profiles of National Cycle Network usage are derived from route user surveys. A further 42 of these were conducted in 2007. Sustrans holds a database of over 35,000 face-to-face interviews with route users collected over the past seven years. Survey response data is weighted on the basis of concurrent local user counts and national Network usage estimates, in-line with the recommendations of an independent review of the survey process.

Case studies
The case studies presented are derived from count and survey data collected by Sustrans and partners.

Future reporting
We are always seeking to improve our methodology for interpreting the data we collect. Over the next few years we particularly wish to:

1. Improve the sophistication of cycle usage estimation based on better modelling of count data.
2. Generate better ‘levels of change’ data for cycling activity.
3. Enhance our understanding of pedestrian activity on road-adjacent routes.

We hope to be able to improve in all three of these areas in the process of delivering Connect2. As well as benefiting from research projects that will be using Connect2 to learn much more about the benefits of walking and cycling to our environment and health, we will also be developing new tools for monitoring usage of different kinds of routes.

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Calculating usage

The National Cycle Network is a UK-wide infrastructure. One of the aspects of its use that we believe we have always underestimated are the very short journeys that take place, particularly in urban areas.

During 2007 we undertook a 12 hour survey on one day on a canal towpath in Woking. The towpath runs through the heart of Woking, linking residential, commercial and industrial centres and sits near to the main railway station.

We collected data from nine points on an eight mile stretch. If most of the journeys on the Network were longer you would expect to see fairly constant usage along its length, with the same users passing most of the points and being counted.

This is not, however, the case. The numbers for different points vary from 90 users at one location to over 1,500 at another. This underlines the extent to which the Network is used for short journeys as well as longer trips.

Data of this kind emphasise how important the National Cycle Network is in enabling very local journeys, and providing a spine for cross-town trips. Other data sets indicate that the number of access points available to sections of Network also influence usage – the greater the access, the higher the usage, particularly by pedestrians who tend to make shorter journeys.

It is also indicative of the challenge we have in monitoring usage of the Network, with selection of monitoring locations crucial to the recording of these short journeys. This is a key reason why we suspect usage is greatly understated.
Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all.

The National Cycle Network is one of these solutions. Working in partnership with hundreds of local authorities, and many other organisations and funders, just over 12,000 miles of routes and links were completed by December 2007.

This Route User Monitoring Report describes usage of the National Cycle Network during 2007. It is full of facts and figures showing how people all over the UK use the Network.

We can only publish a selection of the mass of data we collect. For fuller and more detailed information, visit the Research and Monitoring section of our website at www.sustrans.org.uk to see other data as it becomes available.

For more copies of this report please visit www.sustrans.org.uk to download a PDF or e-mail researchandmonitoring@sustrans.org.uk for printed copies.

Sustrans is also the charity behind Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It, TravelSmart, Active Travel, Connect2 and Liveable Neighbourhoods, all projects that are changing our world one mile at a time. If you think what we do sounds sensible, we urgently need people like you to help us do more. By giving from £5 a month you’ll start to make a difference. Without this financial support, Sustrans and projects such as the National Cycle Network would probably not exist.

To find out more about Sustrans or to become a Sustrans Supporter please visit www.sustrans.org.uk or call 0845 113 00 65.

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∞ miles per gallon